CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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MAHA 'POWER' SHIFT

Sunetra sworn in as first woman DyCM

This marks a major shift from her social work background to the center of state power. Her rise follows the passing of her husband, Ajit Pawar.

MUMBAI

Sunetra Pawar (62), the wife of late NCP chief Ajit Pawar, on Saturday sworn in as Maharashtra's first woman Deputy Chief Minister at the Lok Bhawan in Mumbai amid chants of "Long live Ajitdada" and "Vahinisaheb aage badho".

She replaces her late husband and NCP chief Ajit Pawar in the state cabinet.

PORTFOLIOS

EXCISE, SPORTS, MINORITY AFFAIRS

Following Ajit Pawar's death in an air crash in Baramati on January 28, the Nationalist Congress Party, a constituent of the Mahayuti government, elected Sunetra as the leader of its legislature wing on Saturday, making her the party's nominee for the deputy chief minister post in the Mahayuti government. She was elected during a meeting of the party's legislature wing, held at the office of late Ajit Pawar on the ground floor of the Vidhan Bhavan complex in south Mumbai.

A letter to that effect was submitted to CM Devendra Fadnavis, who forwarded it to Governor Acharya Devvrat. Her nomination was proposed by senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal and seconded by other senior leaders, and she was unanimously elected.

Learnt about Sunetra's swearing-in through media: Sharad Pawar

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar distanced himself from the development, saying he learnt of Sunetra Pawar's swearing-in through media reports and that the decision appeared to have been taken by the NCP. In a new twist, Sharad Pawar on Saturday morning claimed that Ajit Pawar had been actively working toward a merger of the two NCP factions and had even proposed February 12 as the tentative date for reunification.

In this difficult time, the love, trust, and support given by the people of Maharashtra are my greatest strengths. Based on your trust, I will continue to move forward with new hope and energy, keeping Dada's thoughts alive.

—Sunetra Pawar, Maha DyCM

Best wishes to Sunetra Pawar Ji as she begins her tenure as Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the first woman to hold this responsibility. I am confident she will work tirelessly for the welfare of the people of the state and fulfil the vision of the late Ajitdada Pawar.

—Narendra Modi, PM

From reluctant politician to bearer of husband's legacy

MUMBAI

Sunetra Pawar scripted history on Saturday as she entered Maharashtra's political history books as the state's first woman Deputy Chief Minister, marking a dramatic transition from a life largely spent outside frontline politics to the very heart of power.

For decades, she stayed away from active politics, working quietly in the fields of social initiatives, environment, sustainability and entrepreneurship.

A Rajya Sabha member and a long-time presence in social work around Baramati, her rise follows the vacuum created by the sudden death of her husband and Nationalist Congress Party chief Ajit Pawar.

Her elevation as the state's Deputy CM and the head of the breakaway NCP faction earlier spearheaded by her husband is being watched closely for what it signals about the NCP's internal dynamics.

POLITICAL ENTRY

Despite belonging to one of Maharashtra's most influential political families, Sunetra Pawar remained away from electoral politics for decades.

That changed in 2024, when she was fielded by the Ajit Pawar-led faction of the NCP as its Lok Sabha candidate from Baramati, a constituency synonymous with the Pawar legacy.

The contest, fought against her sister-in-law Supriya Sule, became a proxy battle for control within both the family and the party. Sunetra Pawar lost the election, but her political journey had unmistakably begun.

Soon after, she was nominated to the Rajya Sabha, giving her a formal role at the national level. Since taking oath, she has maintained a steady parliamentary presence, participating in debates and committee work, even as she kept a relatively low public profile.

Her potential move to Mantralaya now represents a sharp acceleration in her political trajectory, placing her at the centre of governance during a sensitive transition period for the NCP.

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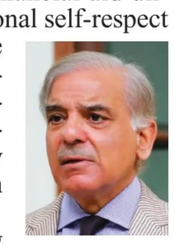
Ashamed of begging for money: Pak PM

KARACHI

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed frustration over his country's reliance on foreign loans, saying seeking financial aid undermines national self-respect and is a source of embarrassment for officials, including Army Chief Asim Munir.



Addressing Pakistan's prominent exporters and business leaders at an event in Islamabad, Sharif emphasised the burden of debt on Pakistan's dignity, indicating the need for alternative economic strategies. "We feel ashamed when Field Marshal Asim Munir and I go around the world 'begging' for money. Taking loans is a huge burden on our self-respect. Our heads bow down in shame. We cannot say NO to many things they want us to do," he said, as reported by agencies.

Sharif's admission of "begging" for loans highlights the country's economic struggles and reliance on international assistance. This comes as Pakistan seeks IMF support and debt rollovers.

QUICK READ

Foreign ministers of Arab countries call on Modi

NEW DELHI

Foreign Ministers of Arab countries on Saturday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who appreciated their role in supporting peace and stability in West Asia. The foreign ministers of Arab nations are in New Delhi for the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Modi highlighted the deep and historic people-to-people ties between India and the Arab world, which have continued to inspire and strengthen the relations between the two sides over the years, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

TN Polls: DMK holds talks with DMDK for alliance

CHENNNAI

To face a resurgent National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the nascent Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) in the 2026 assembly polls, the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu plans to further strengthen its alliance by inducting a couple of new parties, including the DMDK of late actor Vijayakanth. Informal talks have been launched with Premalatha, the late actor's wife, for joining the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA), sources told DH, adding that efforts are also on to rope in several caste outfits that wield influence among people in parts of Tamil Nadu.

SMOKERS' POCKETS FEEL THE BURN AS NEW TOBACCO TAX REGIME KICKS IN

NEW DELHI

From February 1, cigarettes, pan masala and other tobacco products will come under a new, tougher tax regime, with the Centre introducing additional excise duties and a health and national security cess over and above the highest 40% GST slab. The move marks the most significant overhaul of taxation on so-called "sin goods" since the roll-out of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in July 2017.

The new levies will replace the existing structure of 28% GST plus compensation cess that has applied to cigarettes and tobacco products for nearly nine years. With the GST compensation cess set to end after repayment of Covid-era loans to states, the Centre has opted for a fresh framework that relies on excise duties and a dedicated cess to maintain revenue flows while aligning taxation more closely with public health objectives. The government is also introducing a new MRP-based valuation system for several tobacco products such as chewing tobacco, filter khaini, jarda scented tobacco and gutkha. Under this system, GST will be calculated based on the retail price printed on the packet, instead of factory value.

This move is expected to reduce tax evasion and improve revenue collection. Pan masala manufacturers will now have to take fresh registration under the new health and national security cess law starting February 1.

As cigarette taxes rise sharply from February, sellers say smokers are already switching to cheaper, smuggled brands, exposing how price hikes may reshape India's smoking behaviour.

Tobacco & Cigarettes:
New taxes from Feb 1, 2026
What changes
40% GST + New excise duty + Health & National Security Cess
Replaces 28% GST + Compensation Cess (2017–2026)
Cigarettes: Extra Excise Duty (per stick)
Up to 65 mm (non-filter): ₹2.05
Up to 65 mm (filter): ₹2.10
65–70 mm: ₹3.6 – ₹4.0
70–75 mm: ₹5.4
Non-standard designs: ₹8.50
Other Tobacco Products
Chewing / Jarda Tobacco: 82% Excise
Gutkha: 91% Excise
Pan Masala: Health Cess on Capacity
Overall Pan Masala Tax: ~88%
Key Compliance Changes
GST on MRP for Tobacco & Gutkha
New registration for Pan Masala
CCTV on packing machines

Income tax oppression has increased: Pai

BENGALURU

Former Infosys chief financial officer and IT industry veteran Mohandas Pai has slammed "tax terrorism", saying the income-tax oppression is "enormous".

"Today, there is Rs 30 lakh crore of tax amount stuck up in disputes, Rs 15 lakh crore for which the cases are in court. Of this, 80-85 percent happened in the last five years," Pai said during a panel discussion at the Rising Bharat Summit in New Delhi on April 9.

Pai said he has been in business for 40 years and has faced "regulatory oppression" in all these years, adding "brown imperialists" took over from the British after independence.

"We are subjects and victims of government in Delhi and Bangalore and other places because they think they are rulers and we are their subjects and victims. And that wears off into regulations," the Aarin Capital Partners chairman said.

"In the last four years, we have collected Rs 75 lakh crore in direct taxes. How much of black money have they found? How much is the tax they have collected for black money? We had Angel Tax for 8 years...Every time they change a law, they give more powers (to tax authorities)."

SIT to probe Confident Group chairman's death

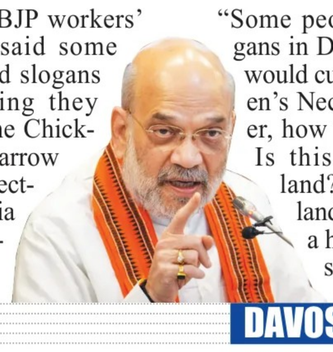
Bengaluru: The Bengaluru police have constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the death of CJ Roy, founder and chairman of the Confident Group, who was found dead at his office premises in the city on January 30. An Unnatural Death Report (UDR) has been registered at Ashok Nagar police station in connection with the incident. In a press note issued on Saturday, Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh said the decision to form an SIT was taken to ensure a "comprehensive and meticulous investigation" into Roy's death. The case has been transferred to the SIT with immediate effect. The SIT will function under the overall supervision of Joint Commissioner of Police (West Zone) C Vamshi Krishna.

'Chicken's Neck' is India's land, no one can lay hands on it'

SILIGURI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that the strategically crucial Siliguri Corridor, often referred to as the 'Chicken's Neck', belongs to India and no one would be allowed to threaten or tamper with it.

Addressing a BJP workers' meeting, Shah said some people had raised slogans in Delhi claiming they would "cut off the Chicken's Neck", the narrow strip of land connecting mainland India with the north-eastern states.



"Some people raised slogans in Delhi saying they would cut off the 'Chicken's Neck'. Why, brother, how will you cut it? Is this your father's land? This is India's land; no one can lay a hand on it," Shah said.

The 'Chicken's Neck', officially known as the Siliguri Corridor, is a narrow stretch of land- about 20-22 km wide and nearly 60 km long- in north Bengal that connects the rest of India with its northeastern states. It is considered a critical and sensitive lifeline from both security and strategic perspectives.

DAVOS DIARY

Had fruitful meetings with Tata Sons, 46 other firms: Patil

BENGALURU

Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium Industries MB Patil on Saturday said the state held 46 bilateral engagements with global and Indian companies, investors, academic institutions and country leaders at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, without signing any MoUs.

Speaking at a press conference in Bengaluru, Patil said the meetings included 26 international and over 15 Indian companies across sectors such as aerospace and defence, advanced manufacturing, food processing, space technology, life sciences, data centres, digital infrastructure and clean energy. While no agreements were signed, the discussions resulted in a strong and credible investment pipeline.

"From Davos, Karnataka has advanced a robust pipeline of investments, expansions and partnerships across aviation and logistics, clean energy manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, space tech, data centres and R&D," he said.

The delegation also held government-to-government discussions with Liechtenstein and Singapore to strengthen institutional collaboration and attract investments. Interactions were held with global thought leaders including IMF's Gita Gopinath and entrepreneur Nikhil Kamath, as well as WEF leaders to deepen Karnataka's engagement with global innovation, trade and sustainability platforms.

Patil said investors showed interest in marquee investments in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, expansion of Global Capability Centres, grid stability for data centres, and water security solutions. Karnataka was positioned as India's leading hub for AI talent, clean manufacturing and next-generation industries.

Global companies engaged included Coca-Cola, Amazon Web Services, Lenovo, Nokia, PayPal, Schneider Electric and Mistral AI. Patil said MoUs were deliberately not signed at Davos, preferring investors to visit Karnataka first.

He added that Karnataka has secured Rs 1.1 lakh crore in fresh investments over the past 11 months and has a near-term pipeline of over Rs 1.5 lakh crore, with focus now on swift execution rather than announcements.

'70 terrorists, 10 security personnel killed in Baloch ops'

KARACHI

At least 70 terrorists, some of them from the BLA, were killed after they carried out attacks on security forces, law enforcement agencies and civilians at 12 different locations in Pakistan's Balochistan province, officials said Saturday.

Sources in the security forces put the number of terrorists killed to 108, however, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti, in a tweet, said 70 terrorists have been killed so far and the operations that started on Friday night are still ongoing on Saturday evening.

SIT to probe Confident Group chairman CJ Roy's death

The SIT will function under the overall supervision of Joint Commissioner of Police (West Zone) C Vamshi Krishna

BENGALURU

The Bengaluru police have constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the death of CJ Roy, founder and chairman of the Confident Group, who was found dead at his office premises in the city on January 30. An Unnatural Death Report (UDR) has been registered at Ashok Nagar police station in connection with the incident.

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Vamshi Krishna to lead probe team

The SIT will function under the overall supervision of Joint Commissioner of Police (West Zone) C Vamshi Krishna. Deputy Commissioner of Police (South Division) Lokesh Jagalasar has been appointed the chief investigating officer. Other members of the team include Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Division) Akshay Hake, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Halasuru Gate Sub-Division) Sudhir, ACP of the Central Crime Records Bureau Ramachandra, and Ashok Nagar police inspector Ravi KB. The team has also been authorised to induct additional officers and resources as required for the investigation.

According to the police, Roy was found with a gunshot injury at his office on Langford Road on Friday afternoon while an Income Tax raid was underway. He was initially rushed to a nearby private hospital and later shifted to Narayana Hospital at HSR Layout for further treatment, where he was declared dead. Police said Roy had arrived at his office earlier in the day while the searches were still in progress.

"The income tax team was searching the premises for the last two to three days. We are not aware of all the details yet. A team from Kerala had come. Police are in touch with the family members, who are not in India at present. They are expected to arrive today," the Commissioner told reporters.

Roy owned a licensed firearm, his brother, CJ Babu, told a Malayalam television channel. Babu also alleged that Income Tax officials had been troubling Roy and that the searches had continued for three days.

Confident Group is a major real estate developer with operations across several southern states, including Karnataka and Kerala, and has its headquarters in Dubai. Confident Projects (India) Pvt Ltd has been involved in multiple tax disputes with the Income Tax Department before the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal and the Karnataka High Court over assessment-related issues.

A native of Kochi, Roy was also associated with the Malayalam film industry and had produced films, including Mohanlal-starrer Casanova (2012). The Confident Group was the title sponsor of several seasons of Bigg Boss Malayalam, hosted by Mohanlal.

Centre misusing agencies like IT: Priyank

Roy's death during the Income Tax action has triggered sharp political reactions in Karnataka, with several ministers alleging harassment by central agencies. Karnataka IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge accused the Union government of misusing agencies such as the Income Tax Department, Enforcement Directorate and GST authorities. "This is nothing but harassment by Income Tax and Enforcement Directorate officials, and it is happening across the country," Priyank said, adding that small and medium businesses and individuals were being subjected to undue pressure.

Will bring out the truth: DKS

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said preliminary information suggested that Roy died after being questioned by Income Tax officials. "When they were asking him a lot of questions, he is said to have asked for five minutes of time, gone inside, and did this," Shivakumar said. "We will do a high-level investigation and bring out the truth. This shouldn't have happened. He was a good businessman."

QUICK READ

Sri Balaji hosts grand second PUC farewell

Kengeri

Sri Balaji Pre-University College, Hanumantha Nagar, hosted a farewell ceremony for its second PUC students, inaugurated by Hulikal Nataraj, member of the Science and Technology Academy. The event celebrated the achievements and memories of the graduating students. Sri Balaji Vidyaniketan President M. Balakrishna, Vice President K. Nagaraj Naidu, Founder Principal of Eke Mataram School Dr. D. Prakash, Joint Secretary Dr. Vanitha Satish, Treasurer R. S. Dharanipati, college Principal Nanjegowda, and Headmaster of Rajarajeshwari High School Gopal were present. The ceremony included speeches, interactions, and blessings for students as they prepare for the next stage of their academic journey.

K'taka coffee farmers seek climate insurance support

Bengaluru

Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA) has urged the Union government to include coffee under climate-linked insurance in the upcoming Budget 2026. Coffee growers in Chikmagaluru, Hassan, and Kodagu, which produce over 70% of India's coffee, face frequent losses due to droughts, floods, and unpredictable weather. Currently, coffee, tea, and rubber are not covered under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), which offers 80–90% premium support. Farmers demand regulatory changes, better compensation, and policy-based disaster relief. Rising input and labour costs, climate volatility, and export requirements are straining growers. KPA hopes the Budget will boost insurance, irrigation, research, and credit support.

Wind up Yelahanka flyover work by Sept end: GBA chief Maheshwar Rao

BENGALURU

He instructed engineers and contractors to solve traffic-related hurdles and speed up the remaining work to meet the deadline

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to complete the Yelahanka flyover by the end of September 2026.

He issued the instruction while inspecting civic works across the Bengaluru North Municipal Corporation limits.

The two-km flyover on Doddaballapur Main Road is about 70% complete. Of the planned 56 pillars, 51 are ready, and five remain. Out of 447 segments, 351 have been placed, while 96 are pending. Because of heavy traffic, segment alignment is being done at night. Rao told engineers and contractors to solve traffic-related hurdles and speed up the remaining work.

On Hennur–Bagalur Road, white-topping has been finished on four of the five kilometres. The final one-kilometre stretch must be completed within 15 days and opened after curing. He also asked officials to begin work on the opposite carriageway within a month in coordination with traffic police.

Rao instructed that five acres of BDA land near Hennur Bande be handed over for a new playground, with tree planting around the site. In HBR Layout Phase 1, three acres of BDA land will be used to create a vending zone for street vendors along with a public garden.

Regarding the Yelahanka Railway Underbridge, one side is complete, but work on the other side is stalled due to land issues. Rao told officials to coordinate with railway authorities, resolve land matters, and finish the project quickly, including road widening.

Senior civic officials and engineers accompanied him during the inspection.

Rao orders action on civic lands

Greater Bengaluru Authority Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to take immediate possession of lands for which relinquishment deeds have already been handed over to the civic body.

He gave the instruction during a review meeting at Yelahanka Mini Vidhana Soudha on issues related to the Bengaluru North City Corporation.

Rao told officers to prepare a list of such lands that are yet to be taken over and begin development works, including road widening and public use projects, without delay.

He also reviewed property tax collection and noted that out of the Rs 1,242 crore target, about Rs 640 crore has been collected so far. Officials were asked to closely monitor progress in each Assembly constituency and take steps to meet the goal.

The commissioner further ordered identification of buildings under construction that have temporary power connections. If any structure is found violating approved plans, electricity supply must be disconnected and legal action initiated.

To improve traffic movement, Rao said towing operations must begin immediately to remove abandoned vehicles from roadsides, in coordination with traffic police.

Regarding the Jakkur Railway Overbridge, he said ramp work on one side is nearly done and the remaining portion must be finished by March-end.

Civic officials said efforts are under way to strengthen tax recovery and update property records. Rao also instructed teams to strictly prevent roadside garbage dumping and maintain cleaner surroundings across North Bengaluru.

Senior engineers, revenue officers, and zonal staff attended the meeting and were told to submit progress reports regularly without fail.

Holy Angels School celebrates Sambhrama 2026

BENGALURU

Holy Angels High School in Hampinagar, Vijayanagar, celebrated its school anniversary "Sambhrama-2026" with great enthusiasm at Nandi Link Ground in Nayandahalli. Students, parents, teachers, and guests gathered in large numbers to witness the colourful programme.

The event was inaugurated by Sri Pradeep Krishnappa, Congress youth leader of the Vijayanagar Assembly constituency. Speaking on the occasion, he said schools should not turn into factories where children only memorise lessons. He praised Holy Angels High School for focusing on the all-round development of students.

He said the school has earned public trust and improved its rating every year. He also noted that quality education is being provided to children from poor and middle-class families, which he said was a proud achievement.

Field Education Officer of Bengaluru South Zone-2, Girijamma H.N., distributed prizes to students who excelled in academics and activities.

School Principal P. Lokesh said parents play a key role in shaping their children's future. He advised parents and students not to expect sudden success, but to aim for small daily improvements.

The celebration concluded with cultural performances, as students entertained the audience with dances in colourful costumes, creating joyful memories for everyone present. Organisers thanked guests and teachers for their support and encouraged continued community involvement locally thereafter.

HC acts on illegal sand mining crisis

BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has taken suo motu action over allegations of illegal sand mining in the state, following the statement of Home Minister G. Parameshwara in the Assembly that influential figures from multiple political parties are involved.

The Home Minister admitted his inability to control sand mafias during the Assembly session on January 27, 2026, calling illegal mining "a big business" and noting the embarrassment and risks in naming individuals. The bench of Justice D.K. Singh and Justice Tara Vitasta Ganju observed that court-supervised investigation is necessary to tackle this growing problem.

The High Court has registered a public interest litigation (PIL), issued notices to the government, and directed it to file objections within three weeks. The matter has been transferred to the Chief Justice's bench for appropriate assignment.

Reports suggest that sand mining continues at night along the Krishna river basin, affecting farmers' crops and creating dust hazards. Lack of CCTV cameras and check posts has led to accidents, injuries, and even threats to public representatives. A woman MLA from Raichur claimed she was threatened by sand mafias after raising concerns.

The bench noted that while tenders for sand extraction have been called, the process is incomplete, allowing mafias to continue illegal profits.

BJP slams state gov over Mysuru drug case

BENGALURU

The Karnataka unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday strongly criticized the Congress-led state government after the Narcotics Control Bureau uncovered an illegal drug manufacturing unit in Mysuru, the home district of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

The opposition party said the government has failed to control drug trafficking and warned that the growing problem is putting the future of young people at serious risk.

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka said the BJP would launch a statewide protest if the government did not take firm and immediate action. He said the issue must be treated with urgency and accused the administration of being careless. Ashoka also referred to a recent Assembly discussion, claiming the Home Minister's reply showed a lack of concern about the spread of drugs in Karnataka.

He questioned the performance of the state police and intelligence wings, saying Karnataka Police were once known for efficiency but now appear weakened. He asked how a major drug operation could run in Mysuru without local agencies noticing it, while central teams stepped in to expose it.

The criticism came after the NCB announced that it had broken an inter-state drug network and sealed a secret laboratory in Mysuru's Hebbal Industrial Area. Officials said drugs worth about Rs 10 crore in the street market, cash, a vehicle, and large amounts of chemicals were seized.

The BJP said stronger enforcement, better coordination, and strict monitoring are needed to stop drugs from reaching youth and harming families across the state. Party leaders said they will also demand regular reviews, special drives near schools, and public awareness campaigns about drug dangers.

Court rejects plea over religious sentiment case

BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has refused to quash a criminal case against a person accused of hurting religious sentiments by posting obscene pictures of Hindu deities and political leaders in a WhatsApp group named "Bajrangi Go Kallu."

A single-judge bench, led by Justice M. Nagaprasanna, dismissed the petition filed by Sirajuddin from Kuppetti Karaya village in Belthangady taluk, Dakshina Kannada, which sought to stop the investigation.

The court noted that the allegations have the potential to hurt religious sentiments and disturb communal harmony. The bench observed that the investigating officer appeared to have not proceeded equally against all group administrators. The court added that members who actively allow the circulation of such images should also be investigated.

The High Court emphasised that crimes of this nature, affecting religious and social harmony, cannot have investigations stopped midway. The case, dating back to 2021, is still under investigation, and the court instructed the investigating officer to complete the inquiry promptly without delays.

The order highlights the court's stance that freedom of speech does not protect actions that intentionally offend religious beliefs. Authorities are expected to complete the investigation soon and ensure accountability for all individuals involved in the dissemination of the objectionable content.

BALANCE MIND-SPEACH

Be gentle in speech, careful in behavior, students told

KENGERI

Students must keep their walk, words, and thoughts pure to achieve real success, said Dr. Prakashnath Swamiji, Managing Director of BGS and SJB Group of Institutions, during the third year convocation and inauguration of new classes at BGS Global Institute of Allied Health Sciences in Kengeri.

Addressing the gathering, he advised students to be gentle in speech and careful in behaviour. He said a person's tongue and mind should never hurt others. Swamiji reminded students that parents make silent sacrifices while raising their children, and it is the duty of every child to respect and care for them.

MLA Dr. Ranganath said that in today's world of information and technology, patients are more aware of their health issues. Therefore, those working in medical services must gain strong knowledge and skills. He highlighted the role of nurses, technicians, and physiotherapists in saving lives. No surgery can be successful without trained assistants, he said, adding that allied health science graduates are in demand across the world.

Prof. Rajesh Shenoy, Director of Padma Shri Group of Institutions, said a degree is only a starting point. True success comes when skill, dedication, and humanity come together. Several education leaders and doctors attended the event and encouraged students as they began their new academic journey.

Certificates were distributed to graduating students, and prayers were offered for their bright future. Speakers wished them confidence and compassion in their careers. The program ended with a cultural performance and a vote of thanks, leaving students inspired to serve society with knowledge, kindness, and responsibility. Parents and teachers applauded the achievements with pride and hope for the coming years.

QUICK READ

Burglary at police quarters; valuables stolen

Mangaluru

A burglary has been reported at the police residential quarters located in front of the Town Hall in Mangaluru, where miscreants broke into a house and made away with valuables. The incident occurred at the Police Line A1 Block. The house belongs to Samarth, who works at the Dakshina Kannada district control room. He had gone to his native place on leave. Taking advantage of his absence, burglars broke open the door, ransacked the Godrej cupboard in the house, and fled with several valuable items. Upon being informed, the police visited the spot and inspected the house. No major damage to the premises was found.

Pope appoints Dr Leslie Clifford D'Souza as new bishop of Udupi

Udupi

Pope Leo XIV has appointed Dr Leslie Clifford D'Souza as the new Bishop of Udupi. He is currently serving as the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Health Church, Shirva. The appointment was made public in Rome on Saturday, January 31, 2026, at 12 noon, corresponding to 4.30 pm Indian Standard Time, and was simultaneously announced at Our Lady of Milagres Cathedral, Kallianpur, Udupi. Fr (Dr) Leslie Clifford D'Souza was born on August 19, 1962, at Uchila (Yermal) in Udupi district, Karnataka, to Mr Lawrence D'Souza and Mrs Cecelia D'Souza. He hails from a deeply rooted Christian family and is one of eight siblings, whose strong faith and values played a significant role in nurturing his vocation.

First Step Trust (R) holds district-level 'Hejje Sambrama' 2026-27 for special children

Udupi

The district-level Hejje Sambrama programme, organised by First Step Trust (R) for the fourth consecutive year, was inaugurated successfully at the Town Hall, Ajjarkad, Udupi, under the inspiring theme Don't show sympathy, give us opportunities. Addressing the gathering, Ajay P Shetty, proprietor, White Lotus Hotel, Udupi, said that These children are special because of their abilities and talents. In Sanatana Dharma, all children are considered important. I pray to Lord Krishna to bless every child with strength and opportunities. Kamalaksha Kamath, auditor, Bahrain - Karkala in his address said that When you are at your lowest, remember that God loves you the most. Special children are deeply loved by God. Continuous communication with children helps us understand their emotions.

Moving Car Gutted in Sudden Blaze on Hemmadi–Kollur Highway

A moving car was completely destroyed by fire near Vandse village, though the driver escaped without injury.

KUNDAPUR

A moving car caught fire suddenly and was reduced to ashes within minutes near Sharke Cross in Vandse village on the Hemmadi–Kollur State Highway on Saturday morning, triggering panic among motorists and local residents in the area.

The vehicle belonged to Bhaskar Achar, a resident of Beejadi, who was travelling to Alur on work. According to sources, the incident occurred around 10 am while he was returning towards Kundapur. While driving, Achar noticed smoke accompanied by a loud noise emerging from the front portion of the car. Realising the seriousness of the situation, he immediately pulled over to the side of the road and exited the vehicle.

Within moments, the flames intensified rapidly and engulfed the car. Local residents rushed to the spot and attempted to douse the fire using available means. However, the blaze spread swiftly and proved uncontrollable. The car was completely gutted in a short span of time, leaving behind only a charred shell. Fortunately, Bhaskar Achar escaped unhurt as he managed to get out of the vehicle before the fire escalated.

Preliminary information indicates that the fire may have been caused by a short circuit in the vehicle. The exact cause, however, will be confirmed after a detailed technical assessment.

Personnel from the Kundapur Fire and Emergency Services rushed to the scene soon after receiving information and helped secure the area. Police from the Kollur Police Station also visited the spot and conducted an inspection as part of the initial investigation.

Traffic movement on the Hemmadi–Kollur State Highway was briefly affected during the incident, as onlookers gathered and emergency services carried out their duties. Normal traffic was restored after the burnt vehicle was cleared from the roadside. Authorities have advised motorists to remain alert to unusual sounds or smoke while driving and to ensure regular vehicle maintenance to prevent such incidents. The incident once again highlights the importance of swift response and presence of mind, which helped avert a possible tragedy.

Bike rider seriously injured in car collision near Perabe

PUTTUR

A bike rider sustained serious injuries following a head-on collision with a car near Kochakatte in Perabe village. The injured rider has been identified as Dayanand, a resident of Hosmath Deraje, who was rushed to Puttur Government Hospital for treatment.

According to police sources, Dayanand, an employee of MESCOM, was returning home after completing his duty when the accident occurred. The incident took place when a car travelling from Kadaba towards Uppinangadi reportedly lost control while attempting to overtake another vehicle on the road.

During the overtaking manoeuvre, the car allegedly veered into the opposite lane and collided head-on with Dayanand's motorcycle. The impact was severe, with the car dragging the bike for several metres before finally coming to a halt. Passersby rushed to the scene and alerted emergency services, following which the injured rider was shifted to hospital.

Doctors at Puttur Government Hospital said Dayanand sustained multiple injuries and is undergoing treatment. His condition was described as serious, though stable, and further medical assessment is underway.

Police from Kadaba Police Station visited the spot soon after receiving information about the accident. Officers conducted a preliminary inspection, cleared the damaged vehicles from the roadway, and registered a case in connection with the incident.

Police are awaiting crucial medical reports to determine the sequence of events in a teenager's fatal gunshot case.

Police Await Medical Reports to Clarify Teen's Gunshot Death Case

PUTTUR

Police are waiting for key medical and forensic reports to intensify their investigation into the death of a 17-year-old boy who succumbed to a gunshot injury in Ramakunja village on the evening of January 24. Investigators say the findings will be central to establishing whether the initial theory that the teenager shot his father before turning the gun on himself is accurate.

The deceased has been identified as Moksh, son of Vasanth Amin and Jayashree, residents of Paade in Ramakunja village. The incident occurred at the family's Paade house on Saturday evening.

Initial information suggested that Moksh allegedly attacked his father with a firearm and subsequently died by suicide. However, the case has taken a complex turn after fresh details emerged indicating that Vasanth Amin, who remains in critical condition, also sustained gunshot wounds. This development has raised doubts about the earlier version of events.

Complicating matters further, Jayashree has lodged a complaint alleging that her husband, Vasanth Amin, was responsible for killing their son. Police sources said this allegation, combined with the nature of the injuries, necessitates a thorough forensic reconstruction of the incident.

Investigators stressed that the medical report of the injured father and the post-mortem report of the deceased teenager will be decisive in determining the sequence and direction of the gunshots, the range of fire, and whether more than one person discharged the weapon. These reports will play a crucial role in clarifying the circumstances and guiding the next steps of the investigation, a police source said.

The firearm involved is reported to be an England-made single-barrel SBBL gun. Sources said the weapon originally belonged to the late Madan Seraje, a senior communist leader and maternal uncle of Vasanth Amin. According to locals, Seraje had used the same gun decades ago to shoot tigers that posed a threat to the region, and photographs of him hunting two tigers with the firearm are said to be preserved at his residence.

Police are also probing how the rare firearm came into Vasanth Amin's possession, as this aspect could have legal implications. Until the medical and forensic reports are received, investigators say conclusions would be premature. The case remains under active investigation.

Retired Police Personnel Felicitated at SP Office

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Chikkamagaluru witnessed a moment of appreciation and gratitude as police personnel retiring on superannuation were felicitated at the Superintendent of Police office on Saturday. The ceremony was organised to honour the dedicated service rendered by the officers during their years in the force. Senior officials of the district police attended the event and congratulated the retirees for their commitment, discipline, and contributions to maintaining law and order. Speakers recalled the vital role played by the retiring personnel in ensuring public safety and upholding police values. Addressing the gathering, officials said the experience and integrity of the retirees would continue to inspire younger officers and strengthen public trust in the police system. As part of the programme, the retirees were presented with mementoes and shawls and extended best wishes for a healthy, peaceful, and fulfilling post-retirement life.

GROUNDWATER LEVELS DECLINE

Groundwater Levels Dip, Moodbidri and Ullal Taluks, Officials Flag Rising Demand as Key Cause

MANGALURU

A decline in groundwater levels has been recorded in the Mangaluru, Moodbidri and Ullal taluks of Dakshina Kannada, raising concerns among officials and residents about long-term water security. The drop has been observed despite the district receiving adequate rainfall, highlighting growing stress on groundwater resources in urbanising pockets.

According to overall groundwater fluctuation data for 2025, these three taluks have seen a fall in water levels, while conditions have improved in the remaining taluks of the district. Officials noted that Dakshina Kannada, barring the affected areas, continues to remain in the 'safe' category in terms of groundwater availability.

In Ullal taluk, groundwater depth had reached a concerning 27.68 metres in 2022. By 2025, this figure improved to 14.67 metres, indicating partial recovery, though levels remain under close watch. In contrast, taluks such as Kadaba, Bantwal and Sullia have witnessed an increase of nearly four metres in groundwater levels during the same period.

The groundwater development department monitors water levels through 61 observation wells spread across all taluks in the district. These wells are equipped with Digital Water Level Recorders (DWLRs), enabling accurate and continuous monitoring of groundwater trends.

Senior geologists from the department attributed the decline primarily to population growth, which has significantly increased domestic water demand. Rising dependence on groundwater for agriculture and horticulture has also contributed to higher extraction rates, particularly in and around urban centres such as Mangaluru.

To arrest further depletion, multiple preventive measures have been initiated. Authorities are placing greater emphasis on rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge through open wells and borewells, and the adoption of drip irrigation and sprinkler systems to improve water-use efficiency in agriculture. Construction of check dams is also being promoted to enhance natural recharge.

Awareness programmes are being conducted at the gram panchayat level to educate communities about sustainable water use. In addition, obtaining a no-objection certificate from local bodies has been made mandatory for drilling new borewells, with officials stating that the rule is being strictly enforced. In select cases, inspections are carried out by a committee headed by the district deputy commissioner in coordination with the groundwater department, and plans are underway to further tighten borewell regulations.

Bacteria-Laced Water Unfit for Drinking Despite Smart City Facelift

Fresh laboratory tests confirm Gujjarakere water is dangerously contaminated, raising health concerns despite costly Smart City development.

MANGALURU

Laboratory tests have once again confirmed the presence of disease-causing bacteria in the water of Gujjarakere, declaring it completely unfit for drinking and reviving long-standing public health concerns. Once revered as a sacred pond believed to cure ailments, Gujjarakere today tells a starkly different story one of unchecked pollution and administrative neglect.

Recent water samples collected from the lake revealed a total coliform count of 1,600 per 100 ml, while faecal coliform levels were also recorded at 1,600 per 100 ml. According to the laboratory report, such levels are extremely dangerous and render the water entirely unsafe for human consumption. Faecal coliforms indicate direct contamination from sewage or human waste, posing serious risks of waterborne diseases.

Ironically, Gujjarakere has been developed at a cost of several crores of rupees under the Smart City Mission. While the lake's surroundings appear visually appealing after redevelopment, the water body itself remains heavily polluted. The continuous inflow of untreated sewage into the lake has been cited as the primary cause of contamination.

This is not the first time Gujjarakere's water quality has failed safety standards. Seven months ago, tests showed a total coliform count of 1,600 per 100 ml and faecal coliform levels at 500 per 100 ml. The latest findings indicate a sharp deterioration, with faecal coliform levels more than tripling since the last test.

Historical data further highlights the severity of the problem. Water tests conducted in 2014 and 2015 had already revealed bacterial counts of around 1,100. Repeated tests in 2016 showed a further rise in contamination. Despite multiple warnings over the years, the situation has only worsened.

As per standard water quality guidelines, potable water must contain zero total coliforms and zero faecal coliforms per 100 ml. While counts of 1–3 are considered satisfactory and 4–10 poor, any reading above 10 renders water unfit for drinking. Gujjarakere's current readings of 1,600 are alarmingly beyond permissible limits.

Local residents have repeatedly appealed to civic authorities and Smart City officials to address the sewage inflow and restore the lake's water quality. However, they allege that no effective or lasting remedial action has been taken so far.

PTA meet and awareness programme conducted at Holy Family School

MANGALURU

A PTA meet and awareness programme was conducted at Holy Family School, Mermajal, focusing on important issues related to drug abuse, mental health, stress management, and behavioral changes in children. The programme featured Dr Survesh Kumar, consultant psychiatrist from Dr Thunga's Manaswini Hospital, Arkula, as a resource person. He provided valuable information on the introduction to drug abuse, its impact on students, the importance of mental health awareness, and effective stress management techniques. He emphasised early identification, parental guidance, and professional support to prevent long-term psychological issues among children.

Another resource person, Shashikala B, counsellor and coordinator of Community Services and academic programmes, spoke about behavioural changes in children. She explained common warning signs, emotional challenges, and the crucial role of parents and teachers in understanding and supporting children during their developmental stages.

The programme was presided over by Fr William Menezes, joint secretary, Holy Family School, Mermajal. Sr Sabina, headmistress of Holy Family School, and Neelan D'Souza, PTA president, were also present and extended their support to the initiative.

Parents, teachers, and PTA members actively participated in the programme, making it informative and impactful. The awareness session highlighted the importance of collaboration between schools, parents, and mental health professionals for the overall well-being and positive development of children.

QUICK READ

District tour program by Minister H.K. Patil

Gadag

Karnataka's Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs, Legislation, and Tourism Minister Dr. H.K. Patil, the Gadag District In-charge Minister, will tour Gadag district on February 1. He will arrive in Gadag at 1 p.m. from Savanoor and participate in the inauguration of Dr. Dhannur Sangameshwara Multi-Specialty Hospital at 2 p.m., near the new bus stand in front of the SP Office. In the evening, he will attend the Mulgund Sri Mahant Shivayogi Jatra Mahotsav at 6:30 p.m. After the event, Dr. Patil will travel to Hubballi via Mulgund road at 7:30 p.m., officials said.

Closing ceremony marks National Road Safety Month

Koppal

The 37th National Road Safety Month, observed from January 1 to 31, saw several programs across Koppal district to raise public awareness about road safety. To conclude the month, a closing ceremony will be held on February 3 at 11 a.m. at the Regional Transport Officers' Office, officials said. The events included campaigns, workshops, and demonstrations to educate citizens on safe driving practices and traffic rules. Regional Transport Officers urged the public to continue following safety measures on roads. The ceremony will celebrate participants' efforts and reinforce the importance of road safety in daily life.

DK Shivakumar signals shake-up in Shivamogga Cong

Party workers complained dedicated cadres are ignored, leaders chase ministers, and district leadership mishandled tensions at a block-level meeting

SHIVAMOGGA

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President DK Shivakumar has expressed strong unhappiness over the weak condition of the Congress party organization in Shivamogga district, raising the possibility of major changes in local leadership.

Shivakumar visited the city to take part in the Taralabalu Full Moon Festival. During his visit, he reportedly reviewed party activities and held discussions with local leaders. Sources said he openly criticized the functioning of the District Congress Committee and indicated that the current setup has failed to energize party workers.

He is said to have taken a dig at District Congress President R. Prasannakumar, stating that the party structure in the district has become inactive. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of District In-charge Minister Madhu Bangarappa, saying the party has not been reaching people effectively.

Party workers from Shikaripura and other areas have complained that dedicated workers are being ignored while leaders remain busy following ministers. Recent tensions between local leaders at a block-level meeting also drew attention, with complaints that the district leadership failed to handle the situation properly.

Activists reportedly informed Shivakumar that government schemes and party programs are not being communicated well to the public, and that the party has not been actively opposing the BJP in the district.

Before leaving Shivamogga, Shivakumar held a separate meeting with select leaders at the helipad. He hinted that a new district president could be appointed soon to rebuild the party.

His visit has sparked fresh discussions within the party, with hopes that new leadership may strengthen the Congress ahead of upcoming local body elections in the district soon.

Rona launches month long tax collection drive

RONA

Officials will target three years' tax arrears, identify defaulters, issue notices promptly, and collect full dues from at least 200 major defaulters per Gram Panchayat

The Taluk Panchayat in Rona has announced a special month-long campaign from February 1 to 28 to ensure full tax collection across 22 Gram Panchayats. Executive Officer Chandrashekar B. Kandakura has directed all panchayat staff to work together and achieve 100 percent collection before the end of the financial year.

At a meeting held at the Taluk Executive Office, the officer said tax collection work must be intensified every day from early morning till evening. Panchayat Development Officers, secretaries, accountants, bill collectors, computer operators, watermen, and support staff have been told to function as one team during the drive.

Special focus will be placed on collecting arrears from the past three years. Officials have been instructed to identify property owners who have not paid taxes and issue notices without delay. At least 200 major defaulters in each Gram Panchayat must be served notices, and full payment should be collected within the campaign period.

The officer also stressed recovery of pending taxes from mobile tower companies, shopkeepers, business owners, and government employees. Public awareness will be created through announcements and village-level outreach so that residents understand the importance of paying taxes on time.

Elected representatives will take part in motivating people ward by ward. No staff member will be allowed leave during the campaign, and strict action has been warned against those absent without permission.

Officials said the collected funds are vital for improving basic services like roads, water supply, and sanitation in villages across Rona taluk. They urged citizens to cooperate and clear dues promptly to support local development works.

Applications open for SC students fee reimbursement

GADAG

The Youth Empowerment and Sports Department has invited applications from Scheduled Caste students for reimbursement of educational fees for NIS training in 2025-26.

Eligible courses include the Six-Week Certificate Course, P.G. Diploma, and M.S.C. Sports Coaching conducted by the Sports Authority of India. Applicants must be Karnataka residents and provide caste and income certificates, Aadhaar, ration card, and bank details.

Government or semi-government employees are not eligible. Only full fees paid will be refunded. Applications must be submitted by February 2, 2026. Forms are available at the department office, and inquiries can be made at 08372-238445.

The group urged faster ring road completion and scientific Raj Canal renovation to improve rainwater flow instead of patchwork repairs

Residents push for underground power lines initiative

KOPPAL

A group of citizens has submitted a public appeal to the City Municipal Council ahead of its budget meeting, urging officials to move electric cables underground and take stronger steps to green the city.

Members of the People's Organizations' Alliance handed over the petition to Municipal Commissioner Venkatesh Naganur and District Urban Development Cell Project Director Manjunath Mallappa Gundur. They said trees planted along roads are being cut because overhead power lines block their growth, and demanded a long-term underground cabling plan.

The group also asked the council to speed up the long-pending ring road and improve the Raj Canal by clearing weeds and ensuring smooth rainwater flow. They urged scientific renovation instead of patchwork repairs.

Citizens demanded better roads, proper speed breakers as per safety norms, and more parking space near markets and government offices. They also called for more public toilets along main roads and near busy areas.

The petition stressed making Koppal plastic-free by enforcing a ban on single-use plastic in shops and meetings. It also highlighted the slow progress of the 24-hour drinking water project and sought faster completion.

Leaders further proposed better education facilities and modern learning centres while asking authorities to include nearby growing areas under city limits.

Alliance members said these steps would improve health, traffic, greenery, and basic services for residents and requested that key demands be included in the upcoming civic budget for the city's long-term development and public welfare goals this year without delay or neglect from concerned departments and elected representatives responsible for implementation and monitoring at all levels effectively and transparently for everyone inclusively always.

Dispute erupts near actor Yash's mother's home

HASSAN

A land dispute near the house of Kannada actor Yash in Hassan has led to a heated argument between his mother, Pushpa Arun Kumar, and a man identified as Devaraj, who claims to be a General Power of Attorney holder for the property owner.

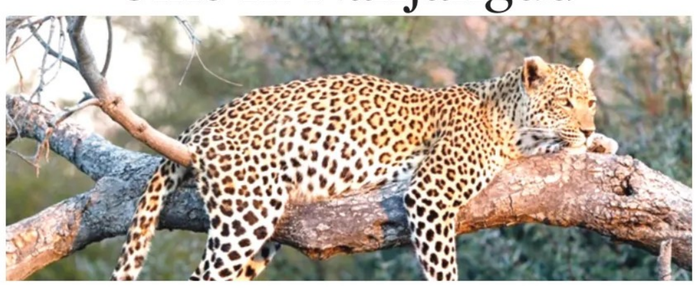
The quarrel reportedly took place at a site in Vidyanagar area, where both sides accused each other of encroaching on a piece of land next to the actor's residence. Police confirmed that a complaint and a counter-complaint have been filed, and the matter is under inquiry.

According to Devaraj, the disputed land belongs to a woman from Mysuru, and he had earlier approached a court over the issue. He claimed that a local court passed an order in his favour, after which a compound wall at the site was removed earlier this month using machinery.

Pushpa Arun Kumar, however, denied the allegation. She said her family had purchased the land several years ago and had proper documents. She also stated that no official court notice had been served to them before the structure was brought down.

The incident created tension in the neighbourhood, with onlookers gathering as the argument grew louder. Police sources said officers visited the spot to prevent the situation from worsening and advised both parties to resolve the matter legally. Officials said the case involves a civil property dispute, and further action will depend on court records and investigation findings. Meanwhile, residents expressed concern over the public nature of the clash and hoped for a peaceful settlement between the families. Police urged both sides to remain calm during the process.

Leopard attacks family on bike in Nanjangud



MYSURU

A leopard attacked a couple riding a bike along with their child near Chunchanahalli in Nanjangud taluk, leaving all three seriously injured.

The victims have been identified as Mahadevaswamy from Chunchanahalli village, his wife, and their child. They sustained critical injuries in the attack and have been admitted to K.R. Hospital in Mysuru for treatment.

Local residents have expressed concern over the leopard's presence in the area and have urged the Forest Department to capture the animal to prevent further attacks. Authorities are reportedly monitoring the situation and planning measures to ensure.

Farmer's daughter shines with 7 gold medals

DAVANAGERE

Davanagere University celebrated academic excellence at its 13th annual convocation, where Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot awarded degrees and medals to thousands of students. The ceremony honored achievements of undergraduate, postgraduate, and research scholars from the 2024–25 academic year, making it a proud day for families and teachers alike.

The highlight of the event was Nayana N.B., an M.Com student and daughter of small farmers from Jigali village in Harihar taluk. She won seven gold medals and secured first rank, earning the title "Golden Girl" of the university. Nayana said she had only hoped for a top rank, but never imagined winning so many medals. She dreams of becoming a lecturer and said her parents' hard work in the fields inspired her to study harder.

Because her village is far from Davanagere, Nayana stayed at her grandmother's house during her studies. She studied three to four hours daily, revised lessons the same day, and practiced using old question papers. Whenever she had doubts, she sought help from her lecturers.

Another achiever was Uzma, daughter of a fruit seller from Santebenneur, who won three gold medals in B.Ed. She credited her parents' support and her consistent study routine for her success.

Chandan from Chitradurga, who delivered newspapers while studying journalism, also shone by winning two gold medals. He now hopes to pursue a PhD and become a respected journalist.

Governor Gehlot praised students for their dedication and urged them to use education for social good. University officials said success stories show how rural talent can rise with guidance and opportunity. In total, 10,684 students received degrees, proving that determination can overcome any obstacle.

Two names listed in FIR in Kotturu triple murder

VIJAYANAGARA

Vijayanagara District Superintendent of Police S. Janhavi said that two names have been mentioned in the FIR filed at Tilaknagar police station in connection with the triple murder in Kotturu town.

The incident took place at a house in Lal Bahadur Shastri Barangay, where the accused, Akshay Kumar, had initially reported his father, mother, and younger sister as missing. Police became suspicious after investigating his behavior and discovered that all three family members had been murdered.

A murder case was formally registered at Tilaknagar police station on Friday. On Saturday, the accused was brought to Kotturu, and the three bodies buried inside the house were recovered during a funeral ceremony. SP Janhavi said the Tilaknagar police are currently investigating the matter, and the Vijayanagara police will take over further investigation after the official handover of the case.

Details regarding how the murders occurred, the motive behind the killings, and the circumstances leading to the incident are still unclear. Investigations are ongoing to determine the background and sequence of events related to the crime. Authorities have urged the public to allow the investigation to proceed without interference as police gather evidence and question those involved.

The case has drawn widespread attention in the district due to its shocking nature, and officials are working to ensure a thorough and transparent investigation.

Nataraj Janakiraman, Chairman, Karnataka State Coir Development Corporation Limited has been granted the status of Minister of State with immediate effect and until further orders, according to a state government notification.

DIVINE MOON NIGHT

Magha full moon festival draws devotees to temple

MANDYA

Preparations are complete for the Magha Shudda Full Moon Festival at Nimishamba Temple in Srirangapatna, Mandya district, on Sunday, February 1. Around one lakh devotees are expected to visit the temple from across Karnataka to take part in the celebrations.

Devotees believe that taking a holy bath in the Cauvery river and having darshan of Sri Nimishamba Devi on Magha Shudda Full Moon brings good luck. Special arrangements have been made for their convenience. Darshan started from 2 am, and homa-havan ceremonies with special pujas are being conducted at the temple premises.

This year, devotees can take the Magh Shuddha bath in the Cauvery river from 1 am on February 1 until 10 pm on February 2. Authorities have ensured safe bathing and changing facilities for all visitors. Fire brigades have been deployed along the riverbank as a precaution. Adequate electric lights, CCTV cameras, and separate parking areas have been arranged to prevent accidents and maintain order.

Police personnel have been stationed at strategic points, and barricades have been set up to control crowds. Prasad, drinking water, and cleanliness arrangements have been made for all devotees. One lakh laddus have been prepared for distribution. A generous donor from Bengaluru has also arranged morning, afternoon, and evening snacks.

Additionally, KSRTC buses are providing government transport from the city bus stand to the temple to help devotees reach safely. Officials said that every effort has been made to ensure smooth movement, safety, and a spiritual experience for all attendees during the festival.

SIX INJURED IN BIDAR BLAST, PROBE ORDERED

Minister Eshwar Khandre ordered immediate medical care, district-funded treatment, and a detailed investigation into the explosive material source

BIDAR

Six people, including four schoolchildren, were injured after a suspected explosive object went off on a village road in Bidar district on Saturday, officials said. The blast took place near Molige Marayya Temple Road in Molkera village of Humnabad taluk while the victims were walking along the stretch.

Police said two adults suffered serious injuries and were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment, while the four children were reported to be in stable condition.

District in charge Minister Eshwar Khandre expressed shock over the incident and directed officials to ensure quick medical care ensures no delay in treatment costs. He instructed the district administration to bear the medical expenses of the injured and ordered a detailed probe into the source and nature of the explosive material.

The minister asked the Superintendent of Police and explosive experts to visit the spot, gather evidence, and submit a report at the earliest. Police teams and forensic staff have begun examining the scene to find out what caused the blast and who might be responsible.

Officials said they are checking whether the object was left behind by someone or if it was part of some other activity in the area. Security has been tightened around the village as a precaution, and residents have been advised not to touch any unknown objects and to inform police immediately.

Local authorities said awareness messages will be shared in nearby schools and villages so children and parents stay alert and avoid risky items found in open places. Further updates will follow as the investigation continues, police added. The injured families are being given support locally for now.

QUICK READ

Fee refund applications extended till February 15

Chikkaballapur

The Backward Classes Welfare Department has extended the deadline for submitting online applications under the Fees Refund scheme for 2025-26. The scheme is for eligible Backward Classes and Category-1 Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic students studying post-matric courses. Students can now apply until February 15 through the official website ssp.postmatric.karnataka.gov.in. Details about eligibility, required documents, and government orders are available at bcwd.karnataka.gov.in. For assistance, students may contact the helpline number 8050770005, email bcwdhelpline@gmail.com, or use the state scholarship helpdesk at 1902, officials said. Applicants are advised to apply early and ensure accurate information before final online submission process smoothly.

Madiwala Machidevara Jayanti celebrations scheduled in Vijayapura

Vijayapura

Madiwala Machidevara Jayanti will be celebrated on February 1 in Vijayapura with support from the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, and Kannada and Culture Department. A procession will begin at 9:30 a.m. from Sri Siddheshwara Temple and reach Kandagal Sri Hanumantharaya Ranga Mandira. The main program at 10:30 a.m. will be inaugurated by Industries Minister Dr. M.B. Patil, with Minister Shivanand Patil attending as guest. City MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal will preside. Several ministers, MPs, MLAs, and officials will attend. Dr. M. Nagaraj will speak, followed by Sugama Sangeet by Sruthi Melinimani during the cultural celebrations held citywide.

Police seek help to trace missing man

CHITRADURGA

A missing person case has been registered at Hiriyur Rural Police Station regarding Ramesh C.S., from Chitradevarahatti village in Hiriyur taluk. Ramesh, aged 36, is the son of late Sanna Chithappa. He is about five feet tall, has a chubby face, oily reddish complexion, average build, and speaks Kannada. Police have appealed to the public for assistance in locating him. Anyone with information can contact Hiriyur Rural Police Station at 08193-263555 or Police Inspector numbers 9480803115 and 8277985509. The Deputy Superintendent office number is 08193-263499, and District Wireless Centre can be reached at 08194-222782, police said in official public appeal.

Manjunath urged careful, necessary pesticide use to boost farming profits and protect the environment, releasing a groundnut pest management booklet

Use pesticides only as final farm option: Manjunath

CHITRADURGA

Farmers should treat chemical pesticides as a last step, not the first choice, said District Joint Agriculture Director B. Manjunath during a training programme in Hiriyur taluk. He urged growers to follow integrated pest management methods to protect crops, lower costs, and keep soil and food safe.

The two-day training was held at Babbur Farm by the District Agriculture Training Center along with the Regional Central Integrated Pest Management Center from Bengaluru. The programme was meant for agricultural input sellers, who play a key role in guiding farmers.

Manjunath said pesticides and fertilizers must be used only when truly needed and in the right quantity. Careful use, he explained, can make farming more profitable and reduce harm to the environment. He also released an information booklet on pest management in groundnut crops.

Deputy Agriculture Director Umesh D. advised shop owners not to suggest chemicals for every problem. He said they should first guide farmers on ploughing methods, choosing suitable crop varieties, treating seeds, using biofertilizers, and practicing mixed and intercropping.

Deputy Director of Agriculture Shivakumar K.S. highlighted integrated farming systems as a way to improve income and ensure food security for families.

Plant Protection Officer Dr. Jayasimha warned that careless chemical use can affect food exports and health. Experts explained safety steps to follow before, during, and after spraying.

Assistant Plant Protection Officer V. Bhavya demonstrated the National Pest Surveillance System mobile app and spoke about new biopesticides and natural predators. Hundreds of farm input dealers attended the training and took part actively. Officials said awareness programs will continue to support safe, affordable, and sustainable farming across district.

Second Karnataka police officer caught in bribe

TUMAKURU

Chetan Kumar of Tumakuru Rural Police allegedly demanded Rs 5 lakh to release a Bengaluru advocate's vehicle; Lokayukta officials caught him

A Police Sub-Inspector in Tumakuru was caught red-handed by Lokayukta officials while allegedly taking a bribe to release a seized vehicle, authorities said on Saturday. The case is the second incident in a single day involving a Karnataka police officer accused of corruption.

The officer has been identified as Chetan Kumar, attached to the Tumakuru Rural Police Station. According to Lokayukta officials, he had demanded Rs 5 lakh to release a vehicle that belonged to a Bengaluru-based advocate. Acting on a complaint, officials laid a trap on Friday night.

At around 11.30 pm, Kumar was caught while allegedly accepting Rs 40,000 as part of the bribe at a hotel near Kyathsandra. Lokayukta police questioned him and later produced him before a court. He has been booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act, and further investigation is in progress.

In a separate case the same day, another police officer was also trapped by Lokayukta officials in Bengaluru. Inspector Govindaraju of K.P. Agrahara Police Station was allegedly taking Rs 4 lakh to remove a person's name from a chit fund fraud case.

Officials said he had earlier accepted part of the demanded bribe and was arrested after being caught while taking the remaining amount. He was later sent to judicial custody. A video of the arrest, showing the officer resisting and creating a scene, has surfaced on social media.

Lokayukta officials said both cases show their continued action against corruption within the police department. They urged citizens to report demands for bribes and assured that strict legal steps would be taken against those found guilty, regardless of rank or position involved here.

Federation Asks Karnataka to Challenge Bike Taxi Verdict in SC

BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Federation of Private Transport Associations has urged the State Government to file a Special Leave Petition (SLP) before the Hon'ble Supreme Court challenging the recent High Court judgment in W.P. No. 906/2025, which favours the operation of bike taxis. The Federation stated that the verdict has serious implications for public safety, transport regulation, and the Government's policy-making authority.

The Federation argued that under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, motorcycles cannot be treated as "motor cabs" merely because they can carry a pillion rider. Motorcycles lack protective enclosures, crash safety mechanisms, and structural safeguards required for commercial passenger transport. There is no separate legal provision for bike taxis under the Act or the rules framed under it, and the Central Motor Vehicle Rules clearly distinguish between two-wheelers and passenger vehicles, reflecting legislative intent.

Citing data from NIMHANS and Police Department statistics, the Federation highlighted that two-wheelers account for nearly 70% to 85% of road accidents, often resulting in severe or fatal injuries. It also pointed out that in several bike taxi accident cases, passengers were left without proper insurance coverage or compensation, leaving victims unprotected.

The Federation emphasized that transport permits are not a fundamental right, as held by the Supreme Court in Mithilesh Garg v. Union of India and other cases, and that the State has full authority under Section 67 of the Act to regulate transport services in the interest of public safety. It warned that allowing bike taxis would increase accident risks, threaten passenger lives, harm regulated transport operators' livelihoods, and make enforcement difficult.

The Federation urged the Government to seek the Advocate General's opinion, file an SLP, obtain an interim stay, and safeguard public safety and State transport policy.

Mega job fair brings hope to youth

CHITRADURGA

Thousands of young job seekers will gather in Chitradurga on February 1 as the district hosts a large job fair at the Government Arts College grounds. The event is designed to help educated but unemployed youth find work that matches their skills and qualifications.

The job fair is being organized jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Skill Development and Livelihood Department. Officials say the programme will connect companies from different industries with candidates from across the region. More than 100 companies are expected to take part, including firms from information technology, biotechnology, mechanical, and automobile sectors. Recruiters from Bengaluru, Tumakuru, Shivamogga, Ballari, Davangere, and other districts have also been invited to widen opportunities.

Special rooms have been arranged for interviews, and help desks will guide applicants. Organizers have asked candidates aged 18 to 35 to bring five or six copies of their resumes along with all necessary documents.

Interest has been high, with over 6,250 youths already registering online. Registrations show strong participation from both men and women, and from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes, minorities, and general category applicants.

Candidates hold a wide range of qualifications, from school education to engineering, postgraduate degrees, nursing, pharmacy, agriculture, and technical diplomas.

District Collector T. Venkatesh and Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Dr. Akash have urged all eligible youth to attend and make full use of this chance. Officials also encouraged beneficiaries of the Yuvanidhi scheme to explore job options and build a secure future.

Sericulture Awards applications invited from silk farmers

CHITRADURGA

Applications have been invited for State and District Level Sericulture Awards for 2023-24 and 2024-25 to encourage silk farmers in the district. The last date to apply is February 7.

Eligible farmers must have at least one acre of mulberry plantation and a separate silkworm rearing house. The average yield should be 65 kg per 100 eggs, with minimum cocoon production of 500 kg per acre.

Applicants must possess a silk passbook and purchase records. Interested farmers can contact local silk extension officers or submit applications to the Assistant Director of Silk office, officials said in statement.

Chikkaballapura staff sports meet set for February

CHIKKABALLAPURA

Government employees across Chikkaballapura district will come together for a two-day sports meet and cultural festival on February 6 and 7 at the Sir M.V. District Stadium. The event is jointly organized by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, and the Government Employees Association's district branch. Officials said the program aims to promote fitness, friendship, and stress relief among staff working in different government offices.

A wide range of athletics events has been planned for various age groups. Women under 35 can take part in races from 100 to 800 meters, relays, hurdles, and field events like shot put, discus, javelin, long jump, and high jump. Men under 40 will compete in sprints, middle- and long-distance races up to 10,000 meters, hurdles, relays, and field events.

Separate competitions are arranged for older age groups to encourage broad participation. Men aged 40 to 60 and women aged 35 to 60 will have selected track and field events suited to their categories. Veteran players will also compete in badminton, table tennis, and tennis singles and doubles. Team games include football, volleyball, hockey, kabaddi, cricket, basketball, ball badminton, and throwball for men, while women's teams will play kabaddi, ball badminton, and throwball. Cultural contests such as music, dance, and instrumental performances will add festive spirit.

Organizers have invited all eligible government employees to register and take part. For details, participants can contact the Youth Empowerment and Sports Department office or the Employees Sports Festival president at the given phone number.

Preparatory meetings scheduled for multiple Jayanti celebrations

CHITRADURGA

Preparatory meetings for the celebration of various jayantis will be held on February 3 at the District Collector's Office Hall in Chitradurga. The meetings will be chaired by the District Collector. Discussions on Kayak Sharanar Jayanti will begin at 11 a.m., followed by Sant Shri Sevalal Jayanti at 11:15 a.m. The meeting on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti is scheduled for 11:45 a.m., and Sant Kavi Sarvajna Jayanti at 12 noon. All district-level officers and community leaders have been instructed to attend and offer suggestions for smooth organization of the celebrations, said Assistant Director of Kannada and Culture Department B.M. Gurunath.

SANKRANTI FEST FUN

Sankranti fest brings joy to Government Employees

CHITRADURGA

State government employees in Chitradurga took a joyful break from their routine stress during the annual sports meet and Sankranti celebrations held at Veeravanite Onake Obavva Stadium. The event was organized by the district unit of the State Government Employees' Association on January 29th and 30th. Along with sports and cultural contests, a special evening music program called "Sankranti Sambhram" added color and excitement. Employees came with their families, turning the stadium into a festive space filled with smiles and music.

Film actor Prem attended the celebration and greeted the crowd warmly. Popular singers Kambada Rangaiah, Supritha Bhat, and folk artist Kadabagere Muniraju entertained the audience with hit songs and lively folk tunes. People clapped, swayed, and recorded the moments on their phones. For many employees, it was a rare chance to relax and forget office pressure.

More than 2,500 employees joined the sports events, while over 5,000 people, including family members, attended the evening show. Participants received quality T-shirts and caps, and a festive meal was served to everyone. Winners of various competitions were honored with prizes and mementos.

Association leaders said the program strengthened unity among staff and boosted morale. State President C.S. Shadakshari, Additional District Commissioner B.T. Kumaraswamy, and other officials appreciated the effort. District President Malatesh Muddaji and his team managed the arrangements smoothly.

Employees said the celebrations gave them fresh energy and happy memories to carry back to work. Such gatherings, they said, remind workers that joy and friendship are as important as duty. The association plans to make this festival celebration a regular feature in coming years for all staff families too across districts.

QUICK READ

TMC govt most corrupt, says Amit Shah

SILIGURI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday called West Bengal's TMC government the most corrupt in India. Speaking to BJP workers in Siliguri, he said the state blocked border security work and denied land to the BSF for fencing. Shah also accused Mamata Banerjee's government of creating community tensions. He predicted BJP would win all north Bengal seats in upcoming elections, blaming TMC's corruption and "syndicate raj" for people's anger. State officers, he added, failed to support the Election Commission.

5 killed, 6 injured in Odisha road accident

BHUBANESWAR

At least five people died and six were critically injured when a truck collided with three motorcycles in Ganjam district, Odisha, on Saturday morning. The accident occurred at Haldiapadar on NH-16 near Berhampur. Four died on the spot, and one later in hospital. The truck driver fled but was later arrested. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed grief and announced ₹4 lakh compensation for each family. Authorities are providing medical care to the injured, while investigations continue.

Arab foreign ministers meet PM Modi

NEW DELHI

Foreign ministers from Arab countries met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday. Modi praised their efforts in supporting peace and stability in West Asia. The meeting was part of the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi. Modi highlighted India's historic ties with Arab nations and spoke about future cooperation in trade, energy, healthcare, and technology. He reaffirmed India's support for Palestine and appreciated the Arab League's role in promoting regional peace. Both sides aim to strengthen mutual relations.

Iran never sought nuclear weapons: Araghchi

He stressed Iran's commitment to peace, its defensive capabilities, and readiness for fair nuclear talks while rejecting any pursuit of nuclear weapons

NEW DELHI

Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi met Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Saturday to discuss bilateral relations and regional stability. Araghchi emphasized that Iran has never sought nuclear weapons and is ready for a fair and equitable nuclear deal that protects its people's legitimate interests, ensures no nuclear weapons, and guarantees sanctions are lifted.

He expressed appreciation for Turkey's efforts to promote peace in the region and said Iran is always willing to work with neighboring states to maintain stability and prevent unlawful aggression. Araghchi stressed that Iran is open to negotiations with the United States, provided they occur without threats. He clarified that Iran's defensive and missile capabilities will never be a negotiation topic, asserting the country will expand its military strength as needed to defend itself.

The meeting comes amid heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened military action against Iran following a crackdown on anti-government protests and his push to halt Iran's nuclear programme. Araghchi reiterated that while Iran supports dialogue, negotiations under threats are unacceptable.

The Foreign Minister highlighted that Iran seeks to protect its people and regional peace while remaining committed to lawful and constructive diplomacy. The discussions with Turkey aimed to strengthen regional cooperation, resolve shared concerns, and reinforce the importance of stability, security, and mutual respect among neighboring nations.

Jaishankar, Oman FM discuss trade, strategic ties

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday held talks with Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi in New Delhi. The discussions focused on trade, critical minerals, and regional developments, reflecting the trust and comfort in the India-Oman strategic partnership. Albusaidi arrived in Delhi earlier for the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting, which India is co-hosting with the UAE.

The meeting, happening after a ten-year gap since the first session in Bahrain in 2016, includes Foreign Ministers of Arab League member states and the Arab League Secretary General. It aims to build on prior cooperation in economy, energy, education, media, and culture, and deepen bilateral and regional ties.

India and the League of Arab States formalized their partnership in 2002 through a Memorandum of Understanding. Later, the Arab-India Cooperation Forum was established in 2008 and revised in 2013 to strengthen structural organization. India also participates as an Observer in the League of Arab States, which comprises 22 member countries.

The MEA said Albusaidi's visit will further strengthen the multifaceted strategic relationship, enhancing dialogue, trade, and cooperation across sectors, marking a significant step in India's engagement with the Arab world. Oman's Foreign Minister Badr Albusaidi arrived in New Delhi to attend the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting (IAFMM). The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said his visit will strengthen the strategic partnership between India and Oman. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal welcomed Albusaidi, noting the meeting will enhance multifaceted cooperation.

India is hosting the IAFMM, co-chaired with the UAE, with participation from Foreign Ministers of all Arab League member states and the Arab League Secretary General. The meeting comes ten years after the first FMM in Bahrain in 2016, which identified priority areas including economy, energy, education, media, and culture. The second meeting aims to expand and deepen cooperation across these sectors.

Waqf property survey, lease module added on UMEED portal

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Minority Affairs on Saturday introduced two new modules on the UMEED Central Portal to enhance transparency and efficiency in managing Waqf properties. The newly added Survey Module enables systematic digital recording and updating of property surveys, while the Waqf Property Lease Module allows detailed tracking of leasing information, including lease periods, amounts, and other relevant data. Secretary Chandra Shekhar Kumar called upon all State and Union Territory Waqf Boards to implement these modules broadly and to create awareness among eligible beneficiaries. The UMEED portal, inaugurated by Minister Kiren Rijiju in June 2025, serves as a centralized platform for real-time uploading, verification, and monitoring of Waqf properties under the 1995 Waqf Management Act.

Key features of the portal include geo-tagging of all Waqf assets, an online grievance redressal system, transparent lease tracking, integration with GIS mapping, and public access to verified records. According to officials, these tools aim to improve accountability, encourage public participation, and modernize property management across India. The Ministry is working closely with States and Waqf Boards to ensure proper adoption, supervision, and efficient management of Waqf properties. By leveraging digital technology, authorities expect better tracking, reporting, and overall administration of these assets, ensuring that resources serve the intended beneficiaries while preventing misuse.

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE J.M.F.C. AT DEVANAHALLI
CRL.Misc. No.95/2022
Between: · Smt. Parvathamma and others Petitioners
And: · The Tahsildar, Devanahalli Taluk Respondent

PUBLIC NOTICE

I the undersigned advocate on behalf of my clients Smt. Parvathamma D/o Late. Ramaiah, aged about 58 years, R/at: Ramanathapura village, Koira post, Kundana Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District and others have filed the above petition for the death certificate of Late.Ramaiah S/o Late.Muninanjappa who died on 02.05.1963 at Jalige village, Kundana Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. If any parties who have objections may dispute regarding the same can appear before the Hon'ble Principal Civil Judge and JMFC at Devanahalli and the date of hearing on 23.03.2026 at 11.00 A.M. in C.Mis No.95/2021

By the order of this Hon'ble court
Chief Ministeriel Officer, Civil Judge & JMFC Court Davanahalli
Address for service:- **Sri.K.Mohankumar,** Advocates, Office at:- 1st Floor, Narayanachar complex, Sulibele Road, Devanahalli Town, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to public at large **Mrs.Venkatalakshmi W/O Shivaprasad,** Residing at #876, 1st Main Road, 3rd Cross, BEML Layout, 5th Stage, Rajarajeswari Nagar, Bengaluru South, Karnataka - 560098. She has lost the Registered Original Sale Deed of Doc No.2245-1997-98 dated on 09-10-1997 she has lost at Near Rajarajeswari Nagar bus stop, Bangalore Accordingly she has lodged the complainant on Bangalore City Police with E-Lost dated 29/01/2026 Report No.2034121/2026.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Municipal Katha No.842/736, Situated at Halasinamaradoddi Village, Kanakapura Town, Kanakapura Taluk, Measuring East to West : 50 feet and North to South 15 feet, in all measuring 750 Sq,ft bounded on **East by:** bhasha's House, **West by:** Road, **North by:** Narayanaswami's House, **South by:** Road. If anyone finding the aforesaid document is hereby requested to handover the same to our office at the address mentioned hereunder.

HARISHA S ,ADVOCATE
 # 1479.DRLS Plaza, Union Bank Building.
T Dasarahalli. Bangalore-560057
Mobile: 9060950265

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client **Mr.Lakshminarayan J S/O U Jayavelu Guruswamy. residing at Old No-136, New No 16/1, 6th Cross, Azad Nagar, Chamarajpet, Bangalore South, Bangalore, Karnataka-560018. My clients have owned the property by through Registered Gift Deed Document No.*CMP-1-04365-2023-24, dated: 07-09-2023, now my clint availing loan from Piramal Finance Ltd,** if any person/persons objecting for the proposed purchase or having any rights, title and interest over the schedule property may forward their objections or claims to the undersigned in writing with supporting documents within **seven (07) days** from the date of this publication. if there were to be no response to this notice within the time stipulated, my client will proceed with the Loan Piramal Finance Ltd. Any response after the expiry of the stipulated time,the same will be ignored. **SCHEDULE PROPERTY** All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site. No.76, Sy Nos. 41 & 42, situated at Gubbalala village,Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Built on site measuring East to west : 40 feet and North to South: 30 feet Totally 1200 Sq feet, and bounded on **East By :** Site No.74, **West By :** Road, **North By :** site No.75, **South By :** site No.77.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
 # 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI, Bengaluru-560057.
Email : harishsgowda48@gmail.com
Mob No. 9060950265.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public are hereby informed that my client **Smt.Jenifer W/O Sammanasu,** residing at #43, Muniyamma Road, Munithayappa Layout, Lingarajapuram, Bangalore, Karnataka-560084, My client are willing to purchase the property by availing a loan with Piramal Finance limited by the present property owner Mr.Thipparaju S/O Late Muniswamy, Registered Sale Deed Document No. KCH-1-00633-2012-13, dated: 04-05-2012, my client further states that any disputes his ownership or possession of the schedule property member of the public are hereby notified that if anyone having any adverse claim in respect of the said property hereby advised to place their claim with appropriate written evidence. please note that claims received without written evidence within 7 Days from the date of publication of this notice there after will not be entertained.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No.29 Southern Portion, Katha No. 1168/526, Property No.21, Old House list No. 5288, Khaneshuumari No.1170, Carved in Property Assessment No. 47/1, New Form-B Property Register Sl. No. 55 Issued by BBMP, Bangalore, Situated at Byataguttepalya Village @ Ramaswamy Palya, Kasaba Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, Measuring: East to West: 40 Feet & North to South:16½ in all measuring 660 Sq.ft, and bounded on the :**East by:** Site No.28, **West by:** Road, **North by:** Remaining Northern Portion of same Site No.29, **South by:** Site No.30.

HARISHA .S, Advocate
 # 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI, Bengaluru-560057. Mob No. 9060950265.

CH CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

NAME CHANGE

I, **BI BI HALIMA,** W/o Late Abdul Rahman, resident No 7, Dilshad Manzil, 1st Floor, 3d Main, 1st Cross, Nandagokula Layout, L R Bande, R.T Nagar Post, Bengaluru-560032, have changed my Minor Daughter's name from B**AREERA UZMA to ANAYAH AFSAR AHMED,** vide affidavit dated: 28.01.2026, before Notary G. DAYANANDA, Bangalore

ನಗರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ
ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ

ಕಛೇರಿ ವಿಳಾಸ: ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ರಸ್ತೆ, ವಾರ್ಡ್ 10, ಎನ್ ಆರ್ ಬಡಾವಣೆ ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ–563 125, ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 08154–252056/ ಸಹಾಯವಾಣಿ: 08154–252117, ಇ–ಮೇಲ್:itstaff_ulb_chintamanicity@yahoo.in, cmc.chintamani@gmail.com, ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್:www.chintamanicity.gov.in

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ನಸಚಿ/ತಾಂಶಾ/ಸಿ.ಆರ್/120/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 28.01.2026

ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಕೆ.ಜಿ ದಸ್ತಾವೇಜಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ನಸಚಿ/ತಾಶಾ/ಸಿ.ಆರ್/120/2025–26
ದಿನಾಂಕ: 28.01.2026

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲರ ಪರವಾಗಿ ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು ನಗರಸಭೆ ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ ಇವರು ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಕೆಟಿಪಿಪಿ 2000 ಅಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯದ ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೊಂದಾಯಿಸಿರುವ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಇಂಡೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: (1) DMA/2025- 26/0W/WORK_INDENT54269 (2) DMA/2025-26/WS/WORK_INDENT54266 (3) DMA/2025-26/0W/WORK_INDENT52385 call-2 (4) DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT47893 call-3 (5) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK INDENT54346 (6) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT54345 (7) DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT54343 ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಲು ಷರತ್ತುಗಳಿಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬಹುದು. ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು **ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 13.02.2026 ರಂದು ಸಮಯ ಸಂಜೆ 17:30 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ** ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ಇ–ಪ್ರಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ **ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16.02.2026 ರಂದು ಸಮಯ ಬೆಳಗ್ಗೆ 11:00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ತೆರೆಯಲಾಗುವುದು.**

ಸಹಿ/– ಪೌರಾಯುಕ್ತರು, ನಗರಸಭೆ, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ/ಆರ್.ಓ.ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:395/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

BENGALURU SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT LIMITED
Office of the Deputy General Manager-2, 1st Floor, BBMP Building, Thimmaiah Road, Vasanth Nagar, Bengaluru – 560 052.

No: DGM-2/BSWML/Qtn.-09/2025-26 **Date: 31.01.2026**

INVITATION FOR QUOTATION (IFQ) (Through GOK KPPP only)

The Deputy General Manger-2 invites Item Rate Quotation for the work details in the table given below. The bidder may submit quotation for the work given in the table. Bidder may get information of schedule of quantities from office of Assistant General Manager, Hebbal Division Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited Bangalore. Bidder must be Submit quotation in the form of post physically to office of Assistant General Manager, Hebbal Division, Solid Waste Management Limited, Bangalore within the date and time published. Quotations will be opened at prescribed time and date, in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend the OFFICE OF THE Assistant General Manager, Hebbal Division (contact no: 9480688506) Bangalore Solid Waste Management Limited, Bangalore–560036.

Sl. No.	Name of the works	Approx. Value of Work (Rs. in Lakh)
1	Supply and installation of New Slew Circle ring and bolts, Washer Spring for EX-200 Vehicle Lingadheeranahalli MSW Plant.	
2	Supply and installation of Left Right side Track chain for EX-200 Vehicle Lingadheeranahalli MSW Plant.	
3	Supply and installation of New Right side Track chain for EX-200 Vehicle Lingadheeranahalli MSW Plant.	
4	Supply and installation of Mosquito/Houseflies Controlling Nets/Mesh at Shed A Lingadheeranahalli MSW Plant.	
5	Supply and installation of Mosquito/Houseflies Controlling Nets/Mesh at Shed B Lingadheeranahalli MSW Plant.	
6	Supply and installation of Mosquito/Houseflies Controlling Nets/Mesh at Shed C Lingadheeranahalli MSW Plant.	

Calendar of Events: 1. Submission of quotation **02.02.2026** onwards. **2.** Last date submission of quotations on or before **09.02.2026 up to 4.00 PM. 3.** Date of opening of quotations on **10.02.2026 at 11.00 AM onwards. 4.** Before submission of quotations, bidders must ensure that all the necessary Documents have been attached with quote.

DIPR/CP/5354/ZEN/2025-26 **Sd/- Deputy General Manager-2, BSWML**

ಕಾವೇರಿ ನೀರಾವರಿ ನಿಗಮ ನಿಯಮಿತ
(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಉದ್ಯಮ)
ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್‌ರವರ ಕಛೇರಿ
ನಂ.2, ವಿಶ್ವೇಶ್ವರಯ್ಯ ನಾಲಾ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮದ್ದೂರು, ಮಂಡ್ಯ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ
ಇ–ಮೇಲ್ : vcdnmaddur@gmail.com

ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ :08/2025–26 ದಿ:29.01.2026

ಈ ಕಛೇರಿಯ ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:08/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 29.01.2026 ರಲ್ಲಿ ಒಟ್ಟು 02 ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ (ಕನಿಷ್ಟ ಮೊತ್ತ 99.00 ಲಕ್ಷ ರೂಪಾಯಿಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಗರಿಷ್ಠ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ.350.00 ಲಕ್ಷ ರೂಪಾಯಿ)ಗಳಿಗೆ ಅರ್ಹ ಕೆ.ಡಬ್ಲ್ಯೂ–3 ಮತ್ತು ಕೆ.ಡಬ್ಲ್ಯೂ–4 ರನ್ವಯ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಇತರೆ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಕೆ.ಪಿ.ಪಿ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು.

ಸಹಿ/–ಕಾರ್ಯಪಾಲಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್,
ಕಾವೇರಿ ನೀರಾವರಿ ನಿಗಮ(ನಿ), ನಂ.2, ವಿ.ಸಿ.ವಿಭಾಗ, ಮದ್ದೂರು

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಹಿಸನಿ–ಮಂ/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿ&ಎ/748/2025–26

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LTD. MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED
FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD
CIN : U65923KL2010PLC039179

Regd Office: 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherppu - Thriprayar Road, Thriprayar, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 | **Phone No.:** 0487-3520504, **Website:** www.manappuramhomefin.com

DEMAND NOTICE

Whereas the Authorized Officer of Manappuram Home Finance Ltd., having our registered office at 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherppu - Thriprayar Road, Thriprayar, Thrissur, Kerala 680567 and branches at various places in India (hereinafter referred to as "MAHOFIN") is a Company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 and a Financial Institution within the meaning of sub-clause (iv) of clause (m) of sub-section (1) of Section 2 of the Securitization and Reconstruction of financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act. 2002 (hereinafter referred so as the Act) read with Notification No. S.O. 3466 (E) dated 18th December, 2015 issued by the Govt. of India, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi, inter alia carrying on business of advancing loans for construction and / or purchase of dwelling units and whereas the Borrower / Co-Borrowers as mentioned in Column No. 2 of the below mentioned chart obtained loan from MAHOFIN and whereas MAHOFN being the secured creditor under the SARFAESI Act, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 2 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers as mentioned herein below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notices with further interest thereon within 60 days from the date of notice, but the notices could not be served upon some of them for various reasons. That in addition thereto for the purposes of information of the said borrowers enumerated below, the said borrowers are being informed by way of this public notice.

Sr. No.	Name Of The Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Lan/Branch	Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created	Npa Date	Date Of Notice Sent & Outstanding Amount
1	Karegowda J, Shivamma J, Javalinagappa K, **/NHL00930018531/** Tumkur	All That Piece And Parcel of The House Bearing Katha No.202/2 And E-Katha No.15250070240020006 Measuring East To West: 7.62 Meters And North To South: 12.192 Meters, Situated At Chinnappanahalli Village, Kallambella Hobli, Sira Taluk, Tumkur District, Karnataka, Pin: 572125. East-Remaining Sy. No. 1, West-House of Rathnamma, South-Road & Remaining, North-Remaining Sy. No. 1	27-12-2025	02-01-2026 & Rs.499450/-
2	Puspa Prakash Banikola, Prakash Banikol, Siddaram Walikar, Siddaram Walikar, **/MHL01370041733/** Vijayapura	All That Part & Parcel of The Residential Property No. 204, Anukram No. 207, Measuring 25 X 44=1125 Sq. Ft of Atharga, Tq Indi Dist: Vijayapur, Karnataka, Pin: 586112. East-Road, West-Open Space, South Property of Rekha Banikol, North-Property of Peerawwa Banikol	28-12-2025	02-01-2026 & Rs.300553/-
3	Mohammad Rahamath Ulla Beg, Jaffar Sadiq Beig, Ameen Bl, **/NLAP0048004252/** Davangare	Site No.57, Present Door No.1704, Measuring 12.5 X 40 Fts le., 500 Sq Fts., Situated At Ahmed Nagar, Davanagare, Karnataka, Pin: 577001. East-House of Mahaboob Bi, West-Road, South-Main Road, North-Conservancy & Sewage	30-12-2025	02-01-2026 & Rs.669108/-
4	Manjula H H N, Kumara S, **/MLAP0034004692/** Mysore	Property No.142/101, Unique No.152100103100300142, Honnenahalli Village, Murukahalli Gramapanchythi, Krishnaraja Pete Taluk, Mandya, Karnataka, Pin: 571426 Measuring East To West 12.19 Meters & North To South 9.12 Meters. East-Own Survey No. Land, West-Road, South-Site No. 39, North-Site No. 37	29-12-2025	03-01-2026 & Rs.241125/-
5	Shanthamma K, Nagaraj J, Thejesh K N, Roopa S, **/MHL00910013586/** Hassan	All That Piece And Parcel of The Site And House Property Bearing No. 15160050300020003 2, Gram Panchayath Property No. 32, Situated At Kamaravalli Village, Mathigatta Gram Panchayath, Channarayapattana Taluk And Hassan District, Karnataka, Pin: 573124 Totally Measuring 72.74 Square Meters. East-Conservancy, West-Road, South-Joint Property of Smt. Chikkamma C/O Nanjegowda, North-Conservancy	29-12-2025	03-01-2026 & Rs.225820/-
6	HL Sanjeevanaik, Mamatha C, Renuka Bai, **/NHL00910017051/** Hassan	Property No. 35, Unique No. 151600201501020065, Harathanahalli Village, Puralehalli Grama Panchayath. Arsikere (T), Hassan (D), Karnataka,Pin:573103 Totally Measuring 161.79 Square Meters. East-Own Property, West-Road, South-Conservancy, North-Conservancy	29-12-2025	03-01-2026 & Rs.677588/-
7	Priya T, Rudramurthy B R, Parvathamma R, **/MHL00910019657/** Hassan	Property No. 148, Unique No. 151600701000300145, Bettada Sathenahalli Village, Bagivalu Gramapanchayathi, Holenarasipura (T), Hassan(D), Karnataka, Pin: 573211 Totally Measuring 108.98 Square Meters. East-House Property Belongs To Sri. Basappa, West Road, South-House Property Belongs To Smt. Bhagyamma & Road, North-Own Property	29-12-2025	03-01-2026 & Rs.405192/-
8	Latha K, Sunil Kumar M G, **/MHL00510013257/** Shimoga	All That The Piece Or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Property No. 141/2, E-Property No. 152400401200120165, Measuring Total 532.70 Sq. Meter, Including 68.46 Sq. Meter House, Situated At Mudubasiddapura Village, Mudubasiddapura Village Panchayath, Shikaripura Taluk, Shivamogga District,Karnataka,Pin:577214. East-Property of Sudha W/O Yallappa, West-Property of Kamalakshi W/O Huchhappa, South-Vacant Place, North-Road	30-12-2025	03-01-2026 & Rs.450793/-
9	Rekha R, Ranganatha G P, **/MLAP0051004081/** Shimoga	All That The Piece or Parcel of Site Along With Structure Standing There On Being Bearing Site/Property No. 409, E-Property No. 151200302100600512, Measuring East-West 16.764 Meter X North-South 3.26136 Meter, Total 54.67 Sq. Meter, Including 37.77 Sq. Meter Building, Situated At Haralahalli Village, Haralahalli Village Panchayath, Harihara Taluk, Davangere District, Karnataka, Pin: 577530. East-Property of Revamma, West-Water Path & Property of Muda Hadadi Karibasappa, South-Panchayath Road, North-Vacant Property of Vasatamma	02-01-2026	05-01-2026 & Rs.110953/-

Notice, is therefore given to the Borrowers / Co-Borrowers, as mentioned herein above, calling upon them to make payment of the total outstanding amount as shown herein above, against the respective Borrower / Co-Borrower, within 60 days of publication of this notice. Failure to make payment of the total outstanding amount together with further interest by the respective Borrower/ Co-Borrower, MAHOFIN shall be constrained to take u/s 13(4) for enforcement of security interest upon properties as described above, steps are also being taken for service of notice in other manners as prescribed under the Act and the rules made hereunder. You are put to notice that the said mortgage can be redeemed upon payment of the entire amount due together with costs, charges and expenses incurred by MAHOFIN at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction or private treaty for transfer by way of sale, as detailed in Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act.
Take note that in terms of S-13 (13) of the SARFAESI Act, you are hereby restrained from transferring and/or dealing with the Secured Properties in any manner by way of sale, lease or in any other manner.

Date: 1st February 2026 | Place: KARNATAKA **Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd**

RELIEF IN THE SIGHT?

Budget 2026: A make-or-break moment awaits India's farmers

NEW DELHI

As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman prepares to present her ninth consecutive budget on February 1, farmers across India hope for support through subsidies, guaranteed MSP, easier credit, modern technology, infrastructure, and climate-resilient aid.

The government has focused on four groups – poor, women, youth, and farmers – with steady budgetary support, insurance schemes, and institutional reforms.

Budget allocations for the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare rose from ₹21,933 crore in 2013–14 to ₹1.27 lakh crore in 2025–26. Spending also flows through irrigation, fertilisers, rural employment, and research ministries, showing a growing government commitment. However, agriculture's share in total public expenditure is gradually declining.

Farmer leaders have highlighted ongoing challenges. P. Krishnaprasad of Samyukta Kisan Morcha demanded MSP guarantees and better compensation for losses from floods and droughts, citing gaps in PM Fasal Bima Yojana. He noted instances where onion prices fell below production costs, while middlemen benefited.

The Bharatiya Kisan Sangh advocates wider market access instead of uniform MSP, noting costs vary across regions. It also seeks GST relief on irrigation equipment, support for organic farming, controlled imports of pulses and oilseeds, and encouragement for smallholders to diversify into animal husbandry, bee-keeping, or mushroom cultivation.

Despite government schemes like MSP, subsidies, and insurance, small and marginal farmers owning under two hectares—over 80% of India's farming population—remain vulnerable. Experts suggest broader policy reforms rather than just financial support may be key to sustainable farming.

As Budget 2026–27 approaches, farmers eagerly await announcements that could strengthen incomes, protect livelihoods, and modernize agriculture across India.

QUICK READ

Jaipur man held for 'ISI spy' activities

JAIPUR

A 28-year-old man, Jhabararam, was arrested for allegedly spying for Pakistan's ISI and remanded to police custody for four days by a Jaipur court on Saturday. Rajasthan Police said he shared sensitive Indian Army information and was in contact with Pakistani handlers via social media. Lured through honey-traps and money, he was caught in Jaisalmer and brought to Jaipur for questioning. A case under the Official Secrets Act has been registered after evidence was found.

Kukreja murder: Mumbai court sentences friend

MUMBAI

A Mumbai court on Saturday sentenced Shree Jogdhankar to life imprisonment in the 2021 murder of her friend Jhanvi Kukreja, while acquitting another accused, Diya Padalkar. Kukreja, 19, was killed on January 1, 2021, after a New Year's Eve party in Khar. Police said Jogdhankar and Padalkar assaulted her and dragged her down from the fifth-floor terrace following a dispute over Jogdhankar's alleged closeness with Padalkar. Judge Satyanarayan Navandar found Jogdhankar guilty under the IPC.

'Bharat Jodo Yatra politically transformative'

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday described the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra as a transformative moment in India's politics. Covering 4,000 km over 145 days, the march went from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, passing through 12 states and two Union Territories. Congress said the yatra highlighted growing economic inequality, social polarization, and political authoritarianism. Jairam Ramesh, Congress general secretary, recalled the final speech in Srinagar and noted that letters by Nehru and Patel criticizing RSS and Hindu Mahasabha continue to inspire political discourse.

Zero tolerance for terrorism must be universal norm: EAM

He highlighted India-Arab ties, emphasizing collaboration across trade, energy, tech, education, innovation, and regional peace and security initiatives.

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday emphasized that societies targeted by terrorism have the right to defend themselves and will exercise it.

Speaking at the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, he stressed the need for zero-tolerance against terrorism and stronger international cooperation to combat the global threat.

Jaishankar said terrorism, in all its forms, remains a common challenge for India and Arab nations. Cross-border terrorism, he added, violates fundamental principles of diplomacy and international relations. India and the UAE are co-chairing the meeting, which is the first India-hosted session in a decade, attended by Foreign Ministers and senior officials from all 22 Arab League member states.

He highlighted that the Middle East is undergoing significant political, economic, and demographic changes affecting India's interests. Key developments in Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, Lebanon, Libya, and Syria were discussed, with global peace efforts, including the Gaza conflict resolution, receiving particular attention.

Jaishankar noted India's long-standing partnerships with Arab nations, rooted in trade, culture, and people-to-people ties, and stressed the importance of collaboration in energy, technology, food, and health security. He described the India-Arab Cooperation Forum as a platform to strengthen bilateral and multilateral engagement, covering areas like energy, agriculture, culture, education, digital initiatives, space, start-ups, innovation, and counter-terrorism.

The EAM highlighted recent initiatives, including the launch of the India-Arab Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, which will complement existing cooperation frameworks. The meeting aims to chart a roadmap for India-Arab collaboration for 2026–2028, reinforcing strong ties and shared priorities in peace, security, and development.

Sudan seeks Indian help for reconstruction

NEW DELHI

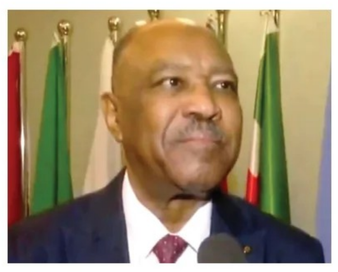
Sudan's Foreign Minister Mohieldin Salim Ahmed Ibrahim highlighted the country's urgent need for reconstruction following its devastating civil war.

Speaking ahead of the second India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi, he said Sudan will brief participants on investment opportunities and plans for business forums with Indian investors and officials.

The civil war, fought between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces since April 2023, caused widespread destruction. While full-scale rebuilding is slowed by ongoing conflict in some areas, localized efforts have begun to restore essential services such as water, electricity, and transportation. The United Nations estimates rebuilding Khartoum alone will cost over $350 million.

Ibrahim emphasized Sudan's readiness to partner with India in sectors like infrastructure, logistics including Red Sea ports, mining, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals. Plans are underway to create an India-Sudan Joint Business Council and Business Forum to strengthen economic and trade ties. Local projects, such as restoring the National Theatre and football stadiums, are already in progress. The minister stressed that these partnerships build on long-standing India-Sudan relations, and the India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting provides a key platform to expand cooperation. India is an observer of the League of Arab States, which includes 22 member nations. The forum, established in 2002 and revised in 2013, is the highest institutional mechanism driving India-Arab dialogue, facilitating investment, collaboration, and strategic partnerships.

Ibrahim invited Indian investors to actively participate in Sudan's reconstruction, highlighting opportunities in critical sectors and emphasizing mutual benefits for both nations.

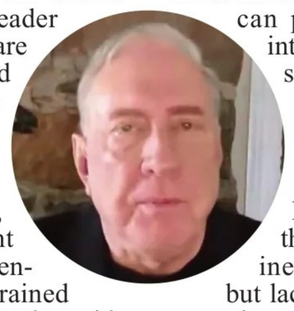


Sudan urges India to invest in post-war rebuilding, focusing on infrastructure, trade, and key sectors like mining and agriculture.

US military expert calls Trump 'erratic, impulsive' leader

NEW DELHI

US military expert Colonel Douglas MacGregor on Saturday criticised US President Donald Trump as an "erratic and impulsive" leader whose decisions are heavily influenced by a small group of billionaires. MacGregor, who has worked with Trump in the past, said the President is not truly independent and is constrained by wealthy donors who guide his political priorities.



MacGregor alleged that Trump's key targets and major decisions are not personally chosen by him but dictated by a handful of powerful billionaires funding his campaigns. "I told you they're a group of eight, nine, or ten billionaires. They have enormous influence because they can pour huge sums into campaigns," he said.

Recalling Trump's stance on ending the Ukraine war, MacGregor said the President genuinely wanted peace but lacked proper study or understanding. "He believed he could end the war on a phone call, reflecting his sincere interest but also his overestimation of presidential power," MacGregor added.

He also criticised Trump's perception of global affairs, noting that the President views the world as it existed 30 years ago. MacGregor described India, China, Russia, and Iran as independent "civilisational states" with distinct interests, adding that current US foreign policy is largely driven by billionaire donors rather than a clear strategy from Trump himself.

Earlier, Trump had stated that progress was being made to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict but acknowledged ongoing tensions between Ukrainian President Zelenskyy and Russian President Putin. He expressed optimism about reaching a settlement despite the challenges.

ED charges metalloids tech, promoters under PMLA

HYDERABAD

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Hyderabad Zonal Office, on Saturday filed a charge sheet under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against M/s Metalloids Technologies Private Limited (MTPL), its Managing Director Jayant Biswas, and his wife Mousumi Biswas. The PMLA Court at Rangareddy took cognisance of the charge sheet on January 28.

The investigation followed multiple FIRs registered by Telangana Police under Section 420 of the IPC, alleging that MTPL and its promoters cheated investors by offering high-return schemes without RBI approval. Originally incorporated for metallurgical and welding business, MTPL allegedly operated as a shell company to collect public deposits through fictitious schemes promising returns from 40% to 200% over short periods.

The ED stated that the promoters collected non-refundable registration fees of Rs 2,222 per ID, issued misleading agreements, and defrauded over 4,000 investors, mobilising Rs 114.52 crore. While Rs 99.57 crore was returned, Rs 14.95 crore was allegedly misappropriated. Early investors received payouts using funds from new investors, following a classic Ponzi model.

Muraleedharan: Not in 'mood' to contest assembly polls

THRISSUR

Senior Congress leader K Muraleedharan on Saturday said he does not wish to contest the upcoming Kerala Assembly elections and that the decision should be left to the party leadership.

He made the remarks after posters supporting his candidature appeared at Kayamkulam in Alappuzha and Thiruvambadi in Kozhikode.

Muraleedharan, son of former Chief Minister K Karunakaran, said, "I am not in the mood to contest elections. Let the party decide. It is not right to contest every election, and I have thought of staying away." He added that his focus would be on party work in Thiruvananthapuram, where a triangular contest is expected.

Commenting on the posters in his support, he said they had appeared across several places, except Payyannur and Kalliasseri. "Whether it is affection or a form of punishment, I do not know. In any case, I have nothing to do with them," he added.

Reacting to Kerala Education Minister V Sivankutty's challenge to Opposition Leader V D Satheesan from Nemom, Muraleedharan said the UDF will field a new and young candidate to defeat both Sivankutty and BJP state president Rajeev Chandrasekhar. He accused Sivankutty of trying to split anti-BJP votes and claimed he had become an "agent of the RSS" for seeking Sonia Gandhi's arrest in the Sabarimala gold case.

He also described the contest as a fight between a CPI(M)-BJP alliance and the UDF, dubbing it a "CJP" alliance. Muraleedharan noted a party demand that sitting MPs should not contest assembly polls, given public dissatisfaction with frequent bypolls. He said the final decision will rest with the party high command, and the UDF candidate list will include both youth and experienced leaders.

UAE MINISTER ARRIVES IN DELHI FOR INDIA-ARAB TALKS

NEW DELHI

UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar, arrived in New Delhi on Saturday for the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting. The visit aims to strengthen the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, focusing on mutual interests, cooperation, and key regional and global issues.

Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for India's Ministry of External Affairs, said the meeting will further bolster bilateral ties. "A warm welcome to H.E. Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar on his arrival in Delhi. His visit will strengthen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and the UAE," he posted on X.

Earlier, Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, arrived in Delhi on Friday for the same meeting to enhance strategic partnership and cooperation with India. Jaiswal also welcomed him, noting the visit's role in deepening bilateral ties.

The meeting, co-chaired by India and the UAE, is being held after a decade and brings together all 22 Arab League nations. Key areas of focus include economy, energy, education, and culture. India-Arab trade currently totals $240 billion, with hydrocarbons contributing $107 billion. Arab nations supply 95% of India's LPG, 60% of LNG, and 47% of crude oil.

This is the first India-hosted FMM in New Delhi, following the inaugural 2016 meeting in Bahrain. The platform was formalised in 2002 and expanded through the Arab-India Cooperation Forum. The 2nd FMM will build on existing cooperation across energy, finance, healthcare, IT, infrastructure, and people-to-people ties, including the 9 million Indians living in Arab countries.

Rajasthan HC denies bail to Vikram Bhatt couple

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan High Court on Saturday denied bail to filmmaker Vikram Bhatt, his wife Shwetambari Bhatt, and another accused, Mehboob Ansari, in a multi-crore fraud case.

Justice Vinod Kumar Bharwani of the Jodhpur bench observed that granting bail at this stage would be inappropriate as the investigation is still ongoing.

The Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) opposed the bail pleas, stating that crucial aspects of the probe remain pending and further custodial interrogation is necessary. According to the prosecution, Vikram Bhatt and his wife allegedly generated fake bills under different names, inducing the complainant to transfer large sums of money. These funds were then deposited into their personal accounts and used for repayment of debts and personal gains.

The SPP informed the court that the accused collectively received ₹4.23 crore from the complainant through multiple accounts. Of this, ₹1.65 crore was allegedly misused after being deposited directly into their accounts. The prosecution also cited pressure on witnesses and warned that releasing the accused could obstruct the investigation.

An FIR was registered on November 17, 2024, at Bhupalpura police station, Udaipur, by Dr. Ajay Murdia of Indira IVF against Vikram Bhatt and eight others for cheating and fraud amounting to nearly ₹30 crore. The complaint alleges that Bhatt and associates promised to produce four films for ₹47 crore, claiming potential profits of ₹100–200 crore. Only two films were completed, while the third and fourth projects remained incomplete, with funds allegedly misappropriated.

Kerala court allows termination of foetus with abnormalities

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Saturday allowed a couple to medically terminate their 31-week-old foetus, which suffers from serious congenital abnormalities of the brain and head. Justice Shoba Annamma Eapen granted permission based on a medical board report stating that the baby, if born, would face severe physical and neurological challenges. The board also noted that continuing the pregnancy could pose significant risks to the mother's mental health. Considering medical evidence, legal principles, and the board's recommendations, the court said denying termination would "only delay the inevitable and extend the suffering of the family." The court directed Kottayam Medical College to form a medical team immediately to carry out the procedure. The team has been instructed to use the safest medical method available while ensuring the life and health of the mother. Before the termination, the foetal abnormalities must be reconfirmed with a final scan.

The court further stated that if the foetus is born alive, the hospital must provide all necessary medical support, including incubation and treatment at any super-speciality centre, to maximise chances of survival. The parents will assume responsibility for the child's care and expenses if the foetus survives. The petitioners had argued that the foetus displayed features of microcephaly and other severe brain and head abnormalities, with a high likelihood of lifelong disability.

MEHRAULI PROJECTS

Delhi CM flays AAP over superficial development

NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Saturday criticised the previous AAP government for prioritising flashy advertisements over addressing the real needs of citizens.

Speaking at the inauguration of projects worth more than Rs 135 crore in Mehrauli, south Delhi, she said that under the AAP, the area's heritage, infrastructure, and public welfare were largely ignored while only a polished image of the city was promoted. CM Gupta said the BJP government is focused on practical governance and real development, pulling Delhi out of the stagnation left behind by the previous administration. "The dream of a developed Delhi will be realised through our homes, colonies, and fully developed Assembly constituencies. Mehrauli is now moving firmly in that direction," she added.

She highlighted that the projects aim to preserve the historical significance of Mehrauli while also introducing modern infrastructure and facilities. The initiatives are expected to improve cleanliness, strengthen roads and public services, and make citizens' lives safer, more organised, and dignified.

The Chief Minister also indirectly criticised the former AAP regime, saying, "Some people merely made Delhi shine in advertisements. Their politics was focused on power; ours is about service, good governance, and development."

The event saw the presence of several local leaders, including MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, MLA Gajendra Singh Yadav, former Councillor Aarti Singh Yadav, and zonal presidents. CM Gupta said the projects mark a significant step in the BJP government's commitment to delivering tangible, citizen-centric development across Delhi.

She added that while preserving the city's heritage, the government is ensuring that citizens benefit from modern amenities, efficient public services, and long-term improvements that strengthen both infrastructure and community life.

QUICK READ

Baloch fighters launch widespread attacks

Quetta

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) has started the second phase of "Operation Herof" across Balochistan. Clashes, explosions, and attacks targeted Pakistani military and police installations in multiple districts, including Quetta, Mastung, Gwadar, and Kalat. BLA spokesperson Jeeyand Baloch called it a "declaration of decisive resistance" against the state. Locals report heavy gunfire and ongoing tensions. The BLA urged people to support fighters, saying the operation shows that "there is no place for the occupier in Balochistan."

India sends 10 bailey bridges to Sri Lanka

Colombo

India has sent 10 Bailey Bridges to Sri Lanka to help restore vital road links damaged by Cyclone Ditwah. The bridges were dispatched from Visakhapatnam to Colombo aboard INS Gharial. This effort is part of India's USD 450 million special package for reconstruction after the cyclone. Last week, a 120-foot Bailey Bridge was inaugurated on the B-492 Kandy–Ragala Road, reopening a key transport route for passengers, goods, and local economic activity. India continues supporting Sri Lanka's recovery.

Taiwan monitors Chinese aircraft, Naval activity

Taipei

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense detected three Chinese military aircraft sorties and eight naval vessels near its territory as of 6 a.m. The armed forces monitored and responded to the activity. Earlier, Taiwan reported 26 aircraft sorties, six ships, and one official vessel, with 19 aircraft crossing the median line into Taiwan's air defense zones. President Lai Ching-te visited Hualien to support troops, promising continued backing and stronger defense resources amid rising regional tensions.

We go begging, our heads bow down in shame: Pak PM

"Foreign aid and investments from China, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar are vital amid Pakistan's economic crisis."

Continued from page 1

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed deep concern over the country's heavy reliance on foreign loans, calling it a source of national shame.

He warned that seeking international financial aid undermines Pakistan's dignity and stresses officials, including Army Chief Asim Munir.

Speaking at an event in Islamabad with business leaders, Sharif said, "We feel ashamed when Field Marshal Asim Munir and I go around the world begging for money.

Taking loans is a huge burden on our self-respect. Our heads bow down in shame." He highlighted the urgent need for alternative economic strategies to reduce dependency on foreign aid.

Sharif acknowledged the support of Pakistan's "all-weather friends," including China, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar. China has provided billions through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, with over $60 billion invested in infrastructure and energy projects. Saudi Arabia extended a $3 billion deposit and a deferred oil payment facility, while the UAE and Qatar pledged multi-billion-dollar investments in energy, ports, agriculture, and LNG projects. These countries are critical for stabilizing Pakistan's foreign reserves and preventing a balance-of-payments crisis.

The Prime Minister also raised concerns over rising poverty and unemployment. Poverty rates have soared to 45% of the population, extreme poverty increased to 16.5%, and unemployment stands at 7.1%, with over eight million citizens jobless. He noted that exports remain heavily dependent on textiles, while growth in software, agriculture, and livestock is limited due to low productivity and structural challenges.

Sharif's remarks underline Pakistan's severe debt crisis, with total public debt surpassing Rs 76,000 billion as of March 2025. The Prime Minister's candid acknowledgment reflects structural economic fragility and the urgent need for reforms to secure sustainable development and national self-respect.

Pak court seeks clarification on Tirah military op

The Peshawar HC seeks clarification on the Tirah Valley operation and orders aid for over 70,000 displaced residents.

PESHAWAR

The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has summoned federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) governments for clarification on a recent military operation in Tirah Valley. Both governments denied authorizing the operation, with KP's Advocate General stating no provincial approval was given. The hearing follows a petition by Barrister Saud Javed Dawar of the National Democratic Movement, who called the operation unconstitutional.

Barrister Dawar argued that the military action violated Article 232, which requires provincial assembly approval, and sought a declaration that the operation was unlawful and violated fundamental rights. The PHC bench, led by Justice Wiqar Ahmad and Justice Mohammad Faheem Wali, directed the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to provide relief to displaced persons. IDP representatives are summoned on February 12.

The federal government cited Article 245, granting it authority to deploy armed forces for internal security without needing emergency proclamations or legislative approval. The interior secretary clarified that no formal orders or operational supervision were issued by the Ministry of Interior. Deployment under Article 245 does not require provincial or parliamentary approval. Civilian agencies like PDMA, NDMA, and provincial departments manage IDP welfare, including shelter, health, and education.

Over 70,000 people, mainly women and children, fled Tirah after warnings from mosque loudspeakers ahead of possible clashes. The military maintains that its operations target Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) fighters, many of whom cross from Afghanistan and reportedly use residents as human shields. The PHC continues to examine the constitutional provisions, the legality of the operation, and relief measures for affected civilians.

KEY POINTS

- Pakistan court seeks government clarification
- Operation linked to 70,000 displaced persons
- Constitutional debate over Articles 232 & 245
- Governments deny approving operation
- Hearing adjourned to February 12

Mira Nair appears in newly-released Epstein documents

WASHINGTON DC

Filmmaker Mira Nair, mother of New York mayor Zohran Mamdani, has been named in newly released documents linked to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The files, unveiled Friday by the US Justice Department, reveal that Nair attended an afterparty at Ghislaine Maxwell's Manhattan townhouse in 2009 for her film Amelia.

The Justice Department released more than three million pages of FBI records, including 2,000 videos and 180,000 images. The disclosure followed the Epstein Files Transparency Act, passed to make all federal documents related to Epstein public. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said the release ensures transparency and confirmed that sensitive materials, such as images of potential victims, were redacted to protect identities.

Among the newly released emails is one from publicist Peggy Siegal, describing Maxwell's party, which she said was attended by Nair, former President Bill Clinton, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, and others. Siegal described the event as an afterparty for Amelia, noting that the film had received mixed reviews.

Other emails include exchanges between Epstein and Elon Musk discussing an invitation to visit Epstein's island. Visuals in the release show prominent figures, including Bill Gates, Steve Bannon, Woody Allen, and Bill Clinton socializing with Epstein. None of these individuals have been charged in relation to the case.

New Epstein files claim Bill Gates 'misused' pills

WASHINGTON DC

Convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein claimed in 2013 that Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates requested medicine for sexually transmitted diseases allegedly resulting from "sex with Russian girls." These claims surfaced as part of a massive 3.5 million-page release of Epstein files by the US Department of Justice on Friday.

Epstein wrote a draft statement in the voice of Gates' longtime science adviser, Boris Nikolic, who was reportedly leaving the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Epstein described his role in assisting Gates with morally questionable and potentially illegal actions, including providing medicine, facilitating affairs with married women, and supplying medication for personal purposes such as bridge tournaments.

A spokesperson for Gates previously dismissed the allegations, calling them "absolutely absurd and completely false." Despite this, the claims have drawn renewed attention

because of the public release of the files.

The draft statement suggests that Epstein warned Gates about potential exposure of his personal life and alleged affairs, including one with Russian bridge player Mila Antonova in 2017. Epstein also allegedly raised concerns that public knowledge could harm charitable pledges and donations associated with Gates' philanthropic initiatives.

Experts note that the files represent draft statements and unverified claims, and no legal charges have been filed in connection with these specific allegations. The disclosure has reignited media discussion about Gates' personal life and his associations with Epstein, though Gates' representatives continue to reject any wrongdoing.

The case underscores ongoing scrutiny surrounding Epstein's connections with wealthy individuals and raises questions about how public figures may have interacted with him in the past.

Armed clashes erupt across Baloch after BLA op announcement

BALOCHISTAN

Armed clashes, explosions, and attacks on security sites were reported across several districts of Balochistan early Saturday, after the Baloch Liberation Army announced the second phase of Operation Herof. Residents described a tense situation in Quetta, Nushki, Kalat, Mastung, Dalbandin, Kharan, Gwadar, Pasni, Tump, Buleda, and Dhadar, with heavy gunfire and blasts reported near police and military locations. In Quetta, firing and explosions were heard in multiple areas, including the Red Zone. On Sariab Road, attackers hit a police vehicle, killing two personnel and setting it on fire. Gunfire was also reported near the railway station, while images showed a damaged security vehicle. In Nushki, loud firing was heard near the Central Jail, with unverified reports claiming parts of the facility were seized. Clashes were also reported near the Frontier Corps headquarters and the Counter Terrorism Department office. In Dhadar, armed men attacked police posts and burned vehicles, injuring several officers. An explosion damaged the main gate of a forces camp in Kalat, with fighting continuing afterward. Similar incidents were reported from Dalbandin, Kharan, Pasni, Gwadar, Tump, and Buleda. The BLA later said it carried out coordinated attacks targeting military and administrative sites. It claimed movement of forces was restricted and fighting continued in several areas, while urging the public to support its campaign. Officials said the scale of the clashes was unclear, as communications were limited, and no official casualty figures were released by authorities by the time of publication on Saturday. Security measures were tightened across affected areas during early hours of the day.

Displaced Tirah families protest over delayed transport payments

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Scores of displaced families from Tirah Valley protested in Bara on Friday due to delays in receiving promised transport fare payments. The protest came amid reports that fewer families were arriving after the evacuation slowdown caused by heavy snowfall.

Frustrated residents threw stones at the Alamgudar Registration Centre and official vehicles after waiting for long periods. Turab Ali from Sipah said families endured harsh winter conditions during travel and could not tolerate further delays. Lal Zamir, another displaced resident, criticized staff for making people wait without valid reasons.

The district administration later closed the Alamgudar Centre and announced plans to revise the cash distribution

schedule to prevent overcrowding and confusion. Although four registration points were set up in Bara, cash was being distributed only at Alamgudar, causing long queues. The other centres at Shalobar, Malakdinkhel, and Qambarabad remained mostly empty due to fewer arrivals.

Evacuation from Tirah had been suspended on January 23 because snow made travel unsafe. A 24-member Tirah Jirga advised remaining residents to stay home, citing harsh weather and conflicting statements about military operations in the valley. Only a few families reached Bara recently after weather improvements.

Officials said that 13,725 families, nearly 70,000 people, have arrived in Bara since evacuations began in late December. All were issued SIM cards after biometric verification at Paindi Cheena and other centres. Authorities assured that remaining families would be registered upon arrival. The revised distribution schedule aims to streamline cash payments and reduce tensions among the displaced population.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	8			6		2		5
2		4	7		9		1	
	3			1		7		4
	5			9		3		8
9		6	5		7		4	
	7			2		1		9
	2		9		1		8	
6		1		4		5		7
	4		6		5		2	

1	8	3	9	2	5	4	7	6
2	7	5	4	8	6	3	9	1
4	9	6	7	1	3	8	5	2
3	1	7	5	4	8	2	6	9
8	5	9	6	7	2	1	4	3
6	4	2	1	3	9	5	8	7
7	2	8	3	9	4	6	1	5
9	6	4	2	5	1	7	3	8
5	3	1	8	6	7	9	2	4

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

US govt partially shuts down despite funding deal

WASHINGTON DC

The US government entered a partial shutdown early Saturday after the Senate approved a revised funding package, but the House is not expected to vote until Monday at the earliest.

The shutdown affects federal agencies temporarily as lawmakers continue negotiations.

The Senate vote separated extended funding for the Department of Homeland Security, delaying it for two weeks to address Democratic demands on Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Proposed reforms include requiring ICE agents to wear body cameras and prohibiting masks during operations. The bill passed the Senate 71-29, with only five Republicans voting against it: Rand Paul, Ted Cruz, Mike Lee, Ron Johnson, and Rick Scott.

The legislation now moves to the House, where Speaker Mike Johnson must secure a two-thirds majority for approval before it reaches President Donald Trump. Both

Republican and Democratic support is crucial for passage.

Earlier, Republican Senator Lindsey Graham lifted his hold on the bill after receiving a commitment for a future vote on banning sanctuary cities. Minority Leader Chuck Schumer emphasized the need for strong ICE reforms, warning that failure to enact meaningful changes could block Democratic support.

The partial shutdown highlights ongoing partisan disagreements over immigration enforcement, funding priorities, and oversight of federal agencies. Lawmakers face pressure to resolve differences quickly, as federal operations and services remain affected. The coming days will determine whether Congress can approve full funding and end the disruption before its effects expand further across federal departments and programs.

QUICK READ

Consumer reforms 2025 focus on speed, access, trust

New Delhi

e-Jagriti, National Consumer Helpline, BIS standards, and Legal Metrology were some of the flagship reforms and high-impact initiatives undertaken in 2025 to boost consumer protection, said the government on Saturday. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution noted that 2025 marked a defining phase for the Department of Consumer Affairs as consumer protection in India moved decisively towards speed, accessibility and trust. In a bid to boost consumer welfare, the government in 2025 undertook large-scale digital transformation, market stabilisation measures, modernised standards, and stronger institutional partnerships in 2025.

NSE IPO can proceed with full risk disclosure: Legal expert

New Delhi

As the National Stock Exchange (NSE) gets ready to file its long-awaited initial public offering (IPO) draft papers in the next 3-4 months, a leading legal expert on Saturday said what matters most is full and timely disclosure of all pending cases and risks in the IPO documents. The capital markets regulator SEBI gave no-objection certificate (NOC) to the NSE, and the exchange can now finalise the structure and timing of its IPO. Supreme Court advocate B. Shravanth Shanker told that the long-pending NSE IPO can go ahead even as regulatory cases related to the co-location and dark fibre issues remain unresolved, provided there is full and timely disclosure of all risks and pending matters in the offer documents.

Tobacco tax regime from Feb 1, cigarettes to get costlier

New Delhi

From February 1, the government is bringing a new tax structure for cigarettes, tobacco products and pan masala, aiming to tighten regulation and keep tax levels high on these so-called 'sin goods'. An additional excise duty will now be charged on cigarettes and tobacco products, along with a new health and national security cess on pan masala. These new levies will replace the earlier system under which these products were taxed at 28 per cent GST along with a compensation cess that has been in place since the launch of GST in July 2017. The government is also introducing a new MRP-based valuation system for several tobacco products such as chewing tobacco, filter khaini, jarda scented tobacco and gutkha.

Expectations galore from Union Budget 2026–27

Ruling party leaders showed optimism before the Union Budget, while Opposition voiced disappointment, low expectations.

NEW DELHI

As Nirmala Sitharaman prepares to present the Union Budget 2026–27 in Parliament on Sunday, political reactions across the spectrum reflected a sharp divide. Leaders from the ruling alliance expressed confidence that the budget would embody an inclusive and forward-looking vision, while Opposition parties said they expected little, accusing the Centre of continued neglect of several states.

Senior BJP leader and Uttar Pradesh minister Brajesh Pathak said the budget would underline the government's commitment to inclusive development. He noted that the forthcoming financial roadmap would give voice to farmers, youth, women, industrialists, and the poor. Tomorrow, the country's budget will be presented in Parliament. Through this budget, we will see how an inclusive framework is crafted — one that becomes the voice of farmers, youth, women, industrialists, and the poor, Pathak said.

He also credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for transformative changes since 2014, highlighting the government's claim of lifting nearly 25 crore people out of poverty. Pathak described these achievements as a strong foundation on which the upcoming budget would build.

Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal emphasised the historic nature of the occasion, pointing out that Sitharaman will be presenting the Union Budget for the ninth consecutive time. The Prime Minister's vision is to make India a 'Viksit Bharat', Meghwal said, adding that recent economic surveys had outlined encouraging trends in manufacturing growth, agriculture's contribution to GDP, and overall economic strength.

He further stated that as India moves closer to becoming the world's third-largest economy, the benchmarks set in the budget would need to be ambitious. According to Meghwal, the government is expected to align fiscal planning with long-term growth objectives and global economic standing.

BJP Rajya Sabha MP Dinesh Sharma framed the budget presentation as a symbol of women's empowerment. He said that a woman finance minister presenting the budget nine times consecutively was a powerful reflection of the government's stated commitment to empowering women. Sharma also noted that the Economic Survey had already provided a clear indication of the country's economic direction ahead of the budget.

Big push likely for defence, infra, capex

NEW DELHI

As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gears up to table the Union Budget 2026-27 in Parliament on February 1, economists say the emphasis this year will be on defence, infrastructure, capex, power, and higher growth in affordable housing, apart from balancing social welfare with fiscal prudence. Besides, policymakers will also balance growth priorities with fiscal discipline amid heightened global uncertainty.

The Budget is likely to strike a deft balance of sustaining growth momentum and maintaining fiscal consolidation. It also needs to address near-term challenges emanating from unprecedented geopolitical flux, said economists.

The government has been steadfast on the path of fiscal consolidation, with the fiscal deficit easing from Covid induced high of 9.2 per cent to 4.4 per cent for FY26E (estimated).

According to experts, government will largely maintain its fiscal rectitude and do not expect major deviation from this path.

FM Sitharaman will present the 15th Budget of the PM Modi government on February 1. This will also be the second full Budget since the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came to power for a third consecutive term in 2024. Sitharaman is also the first woman finance minister of the country to present the Budget in Parliament for the ninth consecutive time.

While the FY26 Budget was more tilted towards stimulating middle-class consumption with tax reliefs, the FY27 Budget's approach to stimulating consumption will be selective, they added.

According to economists, the budget is likely to focus more on capital expenditure, especially in sectors deemed to be strategically important owing to prevailing geopolitical compulsions, said Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd in its 'India Strategy' report.

SBI launches 'CHAKRA' centre to finance India's sunrise sectors

MUMBAI

India's largest state-owned lender, State Bank of India (SBI), on Saturday announced the launch of CHAKRA a Centre of Excellence designed to support financing for sunrise sectors considered vital to India's long-term economic transformation. The initiative aims to create a knowledge-led institutional platform that will enable funding for next-generation, technology-driven, and sustainability-focused industries.

According to an official statement, CHAKRA will concentrate on eight key sunrise sectors: renewable energy, advanced cell chemistry and battery storage, electric mobility, green hydrogen, semiconductors, decarbonisation, smart infrastructure, and data centre infrastructure. These sectors are expected to play a defining role in India's future growth trajectory, particularly as the country accelerates its transition toward clean energy, digital infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing.

SBI said that by 2030, these sunrise sectors are projected to require capital investments exceeding ₹100 lakh crore, underscoring the scale of opportunity and the complexity of financing involved. Through CHAKRA, the bank aims to responsibly channel capital into these capital-intensive areas by strengthening risk assessment frameworks and developing innovative, customised financing structures.

India's growth over the coming decades will be anchored in innovation, sustainability, and advanced manufacturing, said Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, Chairman of SBI. With CHAKRA, SBI is strengthening its institutional capability to understand emerging sectors, design specialised financing solutions, and partner with the broader ecosystem.

Setty added that the Centre of Excellence would reinforce SBI's leadership in new-age technologies and climate finance, while also enhancing India's integration into global value chains. The initiative is expected to support both domestic and international investors seeking structured, data-driven insights into emerging sectors.

The country's largest lender has set up a Centre of Excellence to support financing of sectors such as renewable energy, semiconductors, electric mobility and data centres, with large capital needs.

The government has also welcomed the move. M Nagaraju, Secretary in the Department of Financial Services (DFS), said the centre's vision of becoming a coordinated ecosystem platform would significantly accelerate India's progress towards its long-term development goals. He noted that CHAKRA's focus on knowledge-sharing, project appraisal, capacity building, and evidence-based policy engagement aligns closely with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

NSE IPO process gathers pace as DRHP likely in 3–4 months

NEW DELHI

The long-awaited initial public offering (IPO) of India's largest stock exchange has taken a decisive step forward, with National Stock Exchange Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Ashish Chauhan confirming that it would take around three to four months to prepare the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP), a crucial document required to launch the public issue.

Speaking at the sidelines of an event on Saturday, Chauhan welcomed the clearance from the market regulator, describing it as a breakthrough after nearly a decade of delays. After 10 years, SEBI has agreed to start the IPO process. We thank SEBI for this, he said, acknowledging the role of the Securities and Exchange Board of India in clearing the path for the exchange's listing.

Chauhan said that while the DRHP is being prepared, NSE will simultaneously work on the offer-for-sale (OFS) component of the IPO. It will take three to four months for the draft Red Herring Prospectus to be made, he noted, adding that preparatory work on both fronts would proceed in parallel to avoid further delays.

The exchange currently has around 1.91 lakh existing shareholders. Chauhan explained that eligible shareholders who are willing to divest part of their holdings through the OFS route will be accommodated during the process. In parallel, there are 191,000 existing shareholders. Those who are eligible and want to sell their shares in OFS, we will collect those shares in parallel for offer for sale, he said.

SEBI's approval marks a major milestone for NSE, whose IPO plans had remained stalled for more than a decade due to regulatory concerns. These included governance-related issues and the high-profile co-location case, which led to prolonged investigations and compliance requirements before the regulator was satisfied.

With the regulatory green signal now in place, NSE is expected to move ahead with finalising the structure, size, and timeline of its public issue. The listing is widely seen as one of the most significant events in India's capital markets, given NSE's dominant position in equity and derivatives trading.

IIFT plays pivotal role in shaping future leaders: Goyal

NEW DELHI

The Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) is playing an important role in shaping future leaders and further strengthening India's presence in the global trading landscape, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal. IIFT has been ranked first in the 'Times B-School Ranking 2026', reaffirming its position as a premier institution in management education with a distinctive focus on international trade and global business.

Goyal described the achievement as a testament to IIFT's sustained efforts in empowering students with skills, vision and critical capabilities.

Commerce Secretary and Chancellor of IIFT, Rajesh Agrawal, said the institute's progress reflects its strong academic foundation, expanding global orientation and commitment to excellence.

IIFT supports India's aspiration to emerge as a global powerhouse in international trade and contributes to the vision of Viksit Bharat by nurturing globally competent management professionals aligned with national trade, economic and strategic priorities, he emphasised.

Established in 1963, the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade is a deemed-to-be-university under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

As a premier institution in international trade and business, IIFT offers flagship MBA programmes, executive education and doctoral research, contributing to India's growth in global commerce and trade policy.

Higher STT backfiring on revenue collection: Kamath

MUMBAI

Zerodha co-founder Nithin Kamath has raised concerns over the repeated increase in Securities Transaction Tax (STT), saying that higher taxes are slowly hurting trading activity in the markets. In a recent social media post, Kamath explained that STT was introduced at a time when long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax was removed. However, even after LTCG was brought back, STT has continued to rise with every Union Budget. He said that as a market participant, he always hopes for a reduction in STT, but instead sees it increasing year after year.

As a market participant, I always hope the budget will reduce STT, but it keeps going up. STT was introduced when LTCG was made 0, but now that LTCG is back, Kamath said in a post on social media platform X. Kamath highlighted the sharp hike announced in Budget 2024, where STT on futures and options (F&O) trades was raised by 60 per cent.

The tax on futures went up from 0.0125 per cent to 0.02 per cent, while the levy on options increased from 0.0625 per cent to 0.1 per cent. According to him, the impact was not immediately visible because markets were in a strong bull phase and trading activity remained high. The 60 per cent F&O STT increase from Budget 2024 (0.0125 per cent to 0.02 per cent on futures and 0.0625 per cent to 0.1 per cent on options) didn't impact volumes much at first, the bull market continued with surging participation, he stated.

A DREAM MEANT TO REALISE

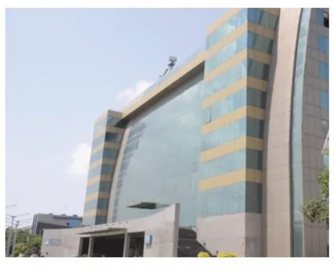
'Institutions must work together to realise 'Viksit Bharat' vision'

NEW DELHI

India's leadership has articulated a clear and forward-looking vision for the country's future, and institutions must contribute both individually and collaboratively to realise the goal of Viksit Bharat, said Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh, Director General and Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA).

The remarks were made during a high-level interaction hosted by IICA, according to a statement issued on Saturday.

Singh underlined the rapidly evolving demands of industry and emphasised the need for institutions to remain relevant and responsive to national priorities. He noted that as India's economy grows in complexity and scale, institutional collaboration will be critical to ensuring policy coherence, capacity building, and sustainable economic outcomes.



The IICA hosted a senior delegation from the National Productivity Council (NPC) to explore potential areas of collaboration. The delegation was led by Neeraja Shekhar, Director General, and Umashankar Prasad, Deputy Director General (Group). Discussions focused on cooperation in training, research, productivity enhancement, sustainability initiatives, and compliance support for industry and government stakeholders.

During the visit, detailed presentations were delivered by the heads of various schools and centres under IICA. These presentations outlined the institute's mandate and wide-ranging activities, highlighting its multifaceted role in education, professional training, policy research, advocacy, and advisory services. According to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, IICA plays a key role in supporting both government programmes and private sector initiatives through evidence-based policy inputs and institutional capacity building.

Shekhar, in her address, traced the origins of the National Productivity Council to 1958, shortly after India's independence, when the country faced scarce resources and an urgent need to improve productivity. She recalled the historic Indian productivity delegation to Japan, which laid the groundwork for institutionalising productivity improvement efforts in the country.

Since then, NPC has significantly broadened its scope, expanding beyond the industrial sector into agriculture, services, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), sustainability, green productivity, and ESG-linked initiatives. Shekhar also highlighted NPC's active engagement with the Asian Productivity Organization, which enables international exposure through inter-country study visits, expert exchanges, and productivity benchmarking frameworks.

LINDSEY VONN Defies Injury Setback, Insists Olympic Dream Lives On After Downhill Crash

CRANS-MONTANA

Lindsey Vonn has once again reminded the sporting world why she remains one of the most compelling figures in Alpine skiing, even as adversity threatens to derail her latest Olympic ambitions.

Alpine skiing icon Lindsey Vonn vows resilience after injury setback threatens her preparations for the Milano Cortina Olympics.

The American legend said her Olympic dream was not over after a heavy downhill crash in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, left her hospitalised just a week before the start of the Milano Cortina Games.

The 41-year-old confirmed that she suffered an injury to her left knee following the crash, a cruel twist of fate given the timing and her recent resurgence on the World Cup circuit. Posting on Instagram, Vonn acknowledged the severity of the setback but struck a characteristically defiant tone, insisting that her pursuit of another Olympic appearance remains alive.

This is a very difficult outcome a week before the Olympics, she wrote. But if there is one thing I know how to do, it's a comeback.

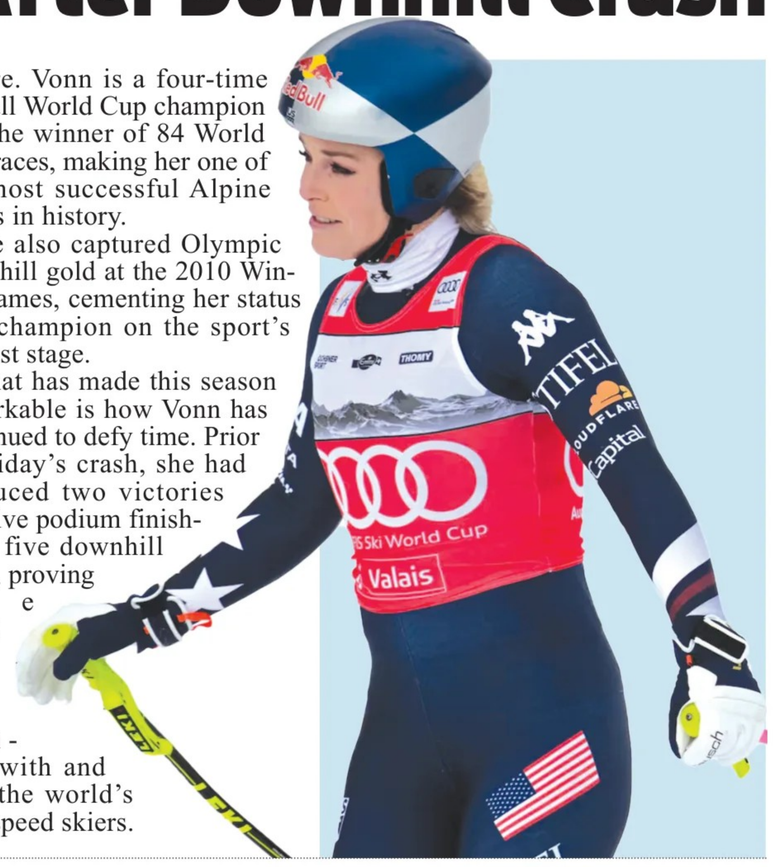
Vonn's confidence is rooted in experience. Over a career spanning nearly two decades at the highest level, she has endured a catalogue of injuries that would have ended many athletes' careers.

Knee surgeries, fractures, and repeated comebacks have become an unfortunate but defining feature of her journey. Each time she has been written off, she has returned to challenge assumptions about age, durability, and longevity in elite sport.

Statistically, her legacy is already secure. Vonn is a four-time overall World Cup champion and the winner of 84 World Cup races, making her one of the most successful Alpine skiers in history.

She also captured Olympic downhill gold at the 2010 Winter Games, cementing her status as a champion on the sport's biggest stage.

What has made this season remarkable is how Vonn has continued to defy time. Prior to Friday's crash, she had produced two victories and five podium finishes in five downhill races, proving she could still compete with and beat the world's best speed skiers.



DJOKOVIC Hits Back at Doubters After Stunning Semi-Final Win Sets

MELBOURNE

Novak Djokovic has forcefully rejected suggestions that his time at the top of men's tennis is nearing its end after producing a vintage performance to defeat Jannik Sinner in the semi-finals of the Australian Open. The 38-year-old rolled back the years in a gripping five-set encounter, overcoming the double defending champion to book his place in yet another Grand Slam final.

The victory not only showcased Djokovic's enduring quality but also served as a pointed response to critics who, in his view, have been eager to push him toward retirement. Speaking candidly after the match, the Serbian great said he had never doubted his own ability to compete at the highest level, despite growing skepticism from commentators and former players in recent seasons. I never stopped believing in myself, Djokovic told reporters. There's a lot of people that doubt me. I see there is a lot of experts all of a sudden that wanted to retire me or have retired me many times the last couple of years. Rather than being discouraged, Djokovic said such criticism had the opposite effect, fuelling his desire to prove them wrong on the sport's biggest stages. I want to thank them all, because they gave me strength, he added. They gave me motivation to prove them wrong, which I have tonight. For me, it's not a surprise, to be honest. I know what I'm capable of.

The semi-final was a stern test of Djokovic's resilience and experience. Facing one of the tour's most in-form players, he was forced to dig deep physically and mentally, particularly during moments when his level dipped. Djokovic acknowledged that Grand Slam matches often demand more than flawless tennis, especially at the later stages of a long career. I've had many, many times in my career matches during the Grand Slam where it's just one of those days where you're not feeling your best, he explained. You try to find a way to win with everything that you possibly have, even though the quality of tennis is not even close to where you want it to be.

Katie Uhlaender Appeals to CAS After Canadian Withdrawals Derail Olympic Qualification Bid

BEIJING

Katie Uhlaender has taken her case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), asking the body to review a decision by Canada to withdraw four athletes from a key skeleton event earlier this month. The withdrawals, Uhlaender argues, had a decisive impact on her chances of qualifying for the upcoming Winter Olympics.

CAS confirmed that the United States athlete has formally requested a review, following the controversial developments at a race held in Lake Placid. The event was part of the Olympic qualification pathway for the Milano Cortina Olympics, which begin on February 6 in Italy.

According to Uhlaender's appeal, Canada's decision to pull four competitors from the Lake Placid races significantly reduced the size of the field. Under the sport's qualification and ranking system, a smaller field meant fewer World Cup ranking points were available. As a result, Uhlaender — a two-time world champion — was unable to accumulate enough points to remain in contention for Olympic qualification.

The 40-year-old is one of the most experienced athletes in skeleton racing and has represented the United States at multiple Olympic Games. Her appeal underscores the fine margins that often define Olympic qualification, particularly in niche winter sports where athlete numbers and event participation can directly influence rankings.

While Canada has not publicly commented in detail on the withdrawals, such decisions are typically made by national federations based on athlete welfare, strategic considerations, or logistical concerns.

However, Uhlaender's case raises broader questions about how late withdrawals can affect competitive fairness, especially when Olympic qualification is at stake for athletes from other nations.

CAS is expected to examine whether the Canadian withdrawals breached any applicable regulations or whether the consequences for ranking points warrant corrective measures. The court's review process may include submissions from the athlete, international federations, and the Canadian authorities involved.

Harry Brook Admits Misleading Account of Nightclub Incident

PALLEKELE

Harry Brook has acknowledged that he previously gave an incomplete account of a nightclub altercation in New Zealand last year, admitting he was not alone during the incident and that his actions were motivated by a desire to protect his teammates. The England white-ball captain said the episode has been a difficult but valuable learning experience in his career.

The incident occurred on October 31 in Wellington, when England were touring New Zealand. A report published by Daily Telegraph II on January 8 claimed Brook was struck by a nightclub bouncer after being refused entry to the venue. At the time, Brook indicated that he had been alone during the confrontation.

However, in a statement released the 26-year-old admitted that other England players were present and accepted responsibility for misleading comments made earlier. Brook explained that his intention had been to prevent his teammates from being drawn into controversy stemming from his own decisions. I accept responsibility for my actions in Wellington and acknowledge that others were present that evening, Brook said. I regret my previous comments and my intention was to protect my teammates from being drawn into a situation that arose as a result of my own decisions.

Brook also confirmed that he had apologised for his behaviour, which he felt had brought embarrassment to himself and the England team. While details of any disciplinary measures were not expanded upon, his statement suggested a period of reflection following the incident.

Rain Limits Barcelona F1 Testing as Verstappen Tops Timesheet for Red Bull

BARCELONA

Formula One teams endured a wet and stop-start second day of private testing in Barcelona with only Red Bull Racing and Ferrari choosing to run in the challenging conditions. Persistent rain limited running for most outfits, turning the session into a cautious exercise focused more on data gathering than outright performance.

Despite the weather, four-time world champion Max Verstappen took to the track for Red Bull and emerged as the standout performer. The Dutchman set the fastest time of the day when the circuit briefly dried, finishing more than a second clear of Ferrari's pace-setter. His lap underlined Red Bull's early confidence as preparations continue for the new season.

Red Bull also made headlines through French driver Isack Hadjar, who had topped the timesheets. According to multiple media reports, Hadjar was involved in a minor off-track incident late in the day, resulting in slight damage to the rear of his car. The team, however, is not believed to be overly concerned by the episode.

Ferrari ran for the first time this week, with Charles Leclerc completing 64 laps during the morning session despite steady rain. The Monegasque driver later handed over driving duties to seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, who logged a solid 57 laps in the afternoon.

Leclerc stressed that Ferrari's priorities were not lap times. For now it's all about trying to understand if everything is working properly, which it kind of did, he said. It's not the best conditions because it has been a little bit raining this morning, but we did our programme anyway because we are not focused on performance whatsoever.

Elsewhere, McLaren, the two-time defending constructors' champions, opted against running, instead fine-tuning their setup. The team confirmed their car will debut on track and is expected to run through.

Real Madrid Shocked Into Champions League Playoffs

MADRID

Real Madrid were sensationally pushed into the Champions League qualifying playoffs after a chaotic and unforgettable defeat to Benfica, coached by former Madrid boss José Mourinho.

The result also condemned reigning champions Paris Saint-Germain to the same playoff route, sending shockwaves through European football.

Madrid entered the final round of the new 36-team league phase sitting comfortably in third place and appeared well positioned to advance directly to the round of 16. Even two goals from superstar forward Kylian Mbappé seemed enough to secure progress. Instead, a 4–2 defeat in Lisbon saw the Spanish giants tumble to ninth in the standings — just one place below the automatic qualification cut-off.

The match descended into chaos late on. Benfica, who were themselves on the brink of elimination, needed a dramatic swing in goal difference to survive.

That moment arrived in extraordinary fashion during the eighth minute of stoppage time when goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin surged forward and scored with a powerful header, sending the Estádio da Luz into raptures.

The goal proved decisive not only in the match but in the standings. Astonishingly, Benfica advanced to the knockout phase in 24th place — the final qualifying position on goal difference alone. Madrid, meanwhile, were left stunned and depleted, having been reduced to nine men moments earlier after red cards for Raul Asencio and Rodrygo further tilted the balance.

For Mourinho, the victory carried added symbolism. Facing the club he once led to domestic and European success, the veteran coach masterminded one of the most dramatic results of the Champions League season, eliminating his former side from automatic progression with a blend of discipline, belief, and late-game audacity.

Jensi Kanabar Creates History as First Indian Female to Win Australian Open

SYDNEY

Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya congratulated India's rising tennis star Jensi Dipakbhai Kanabar after she became the first Indian female to win the Australian Open Asia-Pacific Elite 14 & Under Trophy. The historic triumph came after a sensational comeback victory at the 2026 edition of the tournament, held at Melbourne Park.

Kanabar produced a display of remarkable composure and resilience in the final, rallying from a set and an early second-set deficit to defeat home favourite Musemma Cilek. Trailing 3–6, 0–2, the Indian teenager clawed her way back into the match, silencing the partisan crowd with a fearless baseline game and mental toughness beyond her years.

From Junagadh to Melbourne — India's pride serves an ace, Mandaviya wrote in a post on X, lauding the achievement of the young Khelo India athlete. Congratulations to our Khelo India athlete Jensi Kanabar from Junagadh, Gujarat, for winning the Australian Open Asia-Pacific Elite 14 & Under Trophy 2026 and becoming the first Indian female to achieve this historic feat.

Hailing from Junagadh, Kanabar's success highlights the growing strength of India's regional tennis ecosystem.

Her ability to overcome both a physical disadvantage against a more powerfully built opponent and the pressure of a hostile environment underscored a rare competitive maturity. That stoicism was evident as she lifted the trophy, marking a milestone moment for Indian women's tennis.

> India's teenage tennis sensation Jensi Kanabar scripted history in Melbourne, earning praise from Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

Kanabar's path to the title was equally impressive. She reached the final without dropping a single set, showcasing consistent dominance throughout the tournament. In the semi-finals, she overcame Japan's Aoi Yoshida, displaying nerves of steel after edging a tight first-set tiebreak before accelerating decisively in the second.

Earlier, Kanabar topped Group A with a flawless 3–0 record, defeating several of the Asia-Pacific region's most promising young talents.

In total, she won eight consecutive sets in Melbourne, underlining the baseline consistency and tactical discipline that became her trademark during the event.

Women's HIL Season Two Propels Young Indian Hockey Stars

NEW DELHI

Women's HIL season two spotlighted emerging Indian talent, earning national camp call-ups ahead of key international tournaments.

The second season of the Women's Hockey India League (HIL) proved to be a transformative platform for India's next generation of hockey players, offering them the rare opportunity to compete alongside elite international talent. The tournament delivered high-intensity, competitive matches and played a crucial role in accelerating the development of several young Indian players, many of whom produced consistent, match-winning performances.

Their impressive displays have now been rewarded with selection for the senior Indian women's national team training camp under newly appointed Chief Coach Sjoerd Marijne.

The camp forms a key part of India's preparation for upcoming international assignments, most notably the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup Qualifier 2026, scheduled to be held in Hyderabad in March.

Among the standout performers was 20-year-old defender Lathantluangi, who emerged as a cornerstone of the Ranchi Royals backline. Ranchi Royals finished the Women's HIL with the best defensive record in the competition, conceding just seven goals across the tournament. Lathantluangi's maturity belied her age, as she demonstrated exceptional game awareness, positional discipline, and composure under pressure. Her ability to read attacking threats early and transition defence into attack made her a vital asset. Operating deep in her own half, she consistently used accurate distribution to initiate offensive moves, helping her side build structured attacks from the back. Her performances throughout the league marked her out as one of the most promising defensive talents in Indian women's hockey.

Equally influential was Bansari Solanki of SG Pipers, who played a decisive role in her team's championship triumph. In a tense final against Shrachi Bengal Tigers, Solanki produced a clutch performance in the shootout following a 1–1 draw. The 24-year-old goalkeeper made three crucial saves, including stopping a penalty stroke, as SG Pipers edged out a 3–2 victory to lift the title.

Solanki's calmness under pressure was a defining feature of the final and reflected her consistency throughout the season. Sharing goalkeeping duties with Argentine international Cristina Cosentino, she maintained high standards across matches and was duly recognised with the 'Goalkeeper of the Tournament' award.

Devika to take on Huang Yu in SF of Thailand Masters 2026

NEW DELHI

India's impressive run at the Thailand Masters 2026 badminton tournament continues, with Devika Sihag advancing to the semi-finals of the women's singles competition. Devika will face fifth seed Huang Yu Hsun of Chinese Taipei this afternoon at the iconic Nimibutr Stadium, with the match scheduled to begin at 1.45 PM IST.

Devika booked her place in the last four with a memorable quarter-final victory over Thailand's Supanida Katethong, the world number 16. Playing in front of a partisan home crowd, the Indian shuttler displayed exceptional composure, sharp shot selection, and tactical awareness to outmanoeuvre the higher-ranked opponent. The win marked one of the biggest results of Devika's career and underlined her growing confidence on the international circuit.

Her semi-final clash against Huang Yu Hsun is expected to be a stern test. The fifth seed has been consistent throughout the tournament and will look to use her experience to halt Devika's momentum. However, the Indian shuttler's recent form suggests she will approach the contest with belief, having already proven her ability to rise to the occasion against top-ranked opponents.

India's campaign in women's singles also featured Isharani Baruah, who bowed out at the quarter-final stage. Isharani fought hard but eventually went down to Malaysia's Wong Ling Ching in a three-game battle, losing 18-21, 21-16, 21-13. Despite the defeat, her run reflected resilience and competitiveness against quality opposition.

In the men's singles draw, India's challenge ended in the quarter-finals after Tharun Mannepalli was defeated by China's Zhu Xuan Chen. Tharun lost 11-21, 17-21, bowing out after a spirited effort against a strong opponent.

As the focus shifts to the semi-finals, all eyes will be on Devika Sihag, who carries India's hopes in Bangkok. A win this afternoon would not only secure her a place in the final but also mark another major milestone in her rapidly progressing badminton career.

Cummins ruled out as Australia make two changes in T20 WC squad

SYDNEY

Australia's pace spearhead Pat Cummins has been ruled out of the T20 World Cup due to injury as Cricket Australia made two changes to the provisional squad to finalise their 15-member team for the mega T20 spectacle, commencing on February 7. Cummins, along with Josh Hazlewood and Tim David, had initially been named in Australia's provisional squad, pending fitness.

The pacer, who has not played since his solitary Ashes Test appearance in Adelaide, since suffering a lumbar stress injury in July, has not recovered fully from his lingering back injury and will miss the marquee tournament in Sri Lanka and India.

Meanwhile, top-order batter Matthew Short has also been omitted from the original 15-player squad. However, Josh Hazlewood, who missed the entire Ashes series due to hamstring and Achilles injuries, has been included in the T20 World Cup squad. Tim David is also back in the team after missing the Pakistan tour.

Mitchell Marsh captains the team as Australia named a spin-heavy group, with Adam Zampa joined by Matthew Kuhnemann, Cooper Connolly and all-rounders Glenn Maxwell and Matt Renshaw. Mitchell Owen is the most notable omission from the 15-man squad.

Despite Cummins's absence, the team's fast bowling unit looks strong with Hazlewood leading the pack, supported by Nathan Ellis, Xavier Bartlett and Ben Dwarshuis, who came in place of Cummins.

Australia has been drawn in Group B alongside Ireland, Oman, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. They will play their group stage matches in Sri Lanka, kicking off their campaign against Ireland on February 11 in Colombo.

The team is currently playing a three-match T20I series against Pakistan, where Mitchell Marsh's side lost the first match by 22 runs. Australia squad for the 2026 T20 World Cup- Mitchell Marsh (c), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matt Kuhnemann, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Renshaw, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa, and Ben Dwarshuis.

Delhi Pro Volleyball League set to debut this year

NEW DELHI

Delhi Pro Volleyball League (DPVL) has been officially launched with backing of the Delhi Volleyball Association, along with support from the Delhi Olympic Association. Former national volleyball players Neeti Rawat and Jasoda Gulliya officially announced the Delhi Pro Volleyball League, which will take to the court in 2026.

Kuldeep Vats, President, Delhi Olympic Association and Joint Secretary, Volleyball Federation of India, was present at the official announcement and assured full support to the league.

The league will feature six franchises and include players from Delhi as well as across the country. The players will be selected through fair and open trials to be conducted in the coming months.

Delhi has always produced outstanding volleyball talent. The Delhi Pro Volleyball League is a timely and much-needed initiative that will give players a professional pathway and help strengthen the volleyball ecosystem at both state and national levels, Vats said.

Sudhir Vats, President, Delhi Volleyball Association, was also present at the occasion and welcomed the initiative. This league will play a crucial role in identifying, nurturing and retaining volleyball talent from Delhi. With a transparent structure and fair opportunities, DPVL can become a benchmark for state-level professional leagues in India, he said. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said, Volleyball is not just a sport, it is a game that builds coordination, cooperation and collective strength. Taking this spirit forward and aligning with India's growing sporting economy, the national capital is all set to make its mark on the professional volleyball map with the launch of the Delhi Pro Volleyball League.

Speaking about the long-term vision of the league, Jasoda Gulliya, Co-Founder, Delhi Pro Volleyball League, said, Our vision is to build a professionally governed league that offers stability, transparency and long-term value to players, franchises and partners. DPVL is not just about hosting matches, but about creating a sustainable sporting ecosystem where volleyball talent can grow, earn and aspire globally.

Japan's Tokito Oda becomes youngest man to hold all four Major titles simultaneously

MELBOURNE

Japanese prodigy Tokito Oda made history by winning the Australian Open 2026 men's wheelchair title against Martin De la Puente, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2. This victory made him the youngest man to simultaneously hold all four Grand Slam titles across any professional tennis format. At only 19 years old, Oda's victory over the third seed at Melbourne Park makes him the second man ever to win four consecutive men's wheelchair singles majors, joining Japanese legend Shingo Kunieda, who astonishingly won 12 in a row starting from 2007.

Oda's victory marks his second AO crown and his eighth major title overall, bringing him within two titles of Britain's Alfie Hewett. Now firmly established as the world No.1, Oda is on track to approach Kunieda's record of 28 men's wheelchair singles Grand Slam titles.

First, I gotta say, I was missing you, baby. I want to appreciate Martin. You are my best friend on tour. We always hang out every time, and you speak Japanese, so sometimes it's so funny with you. It's the first time we shared a final at a Grand Slam. I was very happy to play with Martin. Big congrats to your team, Oda jokingly mentioned his first trophy won in 2024 before shifting focus to De la Puente.

Oda also secured the doubles title, teaming up with Argentinian Gustavo Fernandez for his second Grand Slam doubles victory.

Thank you all, I really appreciate all of your love … I hope you guys keep supporting wheelchair tennis. Thank you so much, he said.

The championship match started with De la Puente taking a 3-1 lead in the first set, just before the day's first rain delay. Although Oda managed to briefly catch up, the Spaniard responded strongly, causing Oda to lose his first set of the tournament.

Oda raised his game significantly in the second set, moving quickly to reach balls and returning them deep into the corners, applying heavy spin to force De la Puente out of position.

After a long rain delay, Oda regained control under the Margaret Court Arena roof, securing the title with 52 winners to De la Puente's 31. He also won 74 per cent of his first-serve points, significantly surpassing his opponent's 51per cent.

Kiccha Sudeep Marks Three Decades With Gratitude Promise Message

Kiccha Sudeep marked 30 years in cinema with an emotional note, reflecting on his journey from a hopeful youngster to a celebrated star. Thanking fans, filmmakers, producers, technicians, media, family and Kannada cinema, he vowed humility, hard work and gratitude. Sudeep debuted with Thayavva, calling it his home and identity.

Kiccha Sudeep has completed 30 years in the film industry and marked the moment with a thankful message. The popular actor shared a heartfelt note on social media, looking back at his long journey in cinema. He said his heart felt full as he remembered his growth from a young boy with dreams and doubts to a well known star today. Sudeep thanked his fans and called them his biggest strength and energy. He said their love keeps him motivated to work harder every day. He also expressed gratitude to directors and writers for trusting him with their stories and for pushing him to do better roles. The actor praised producers for their faith and courage, which helped turn many dreams into reality. He also thanked co actors and technicians, saying cinema is teamwork. From light boys and cameramen to costume teams, editors, and spot boys, he said every person's hard work matters.

Sudeep also thanked the television and media for supporting him, questioning him, and helping him grow. He gave special thanks to the Kannada film industry for giving him identity, pride, and a sense of home. He added that he carries Kannada cinema in his heart always.

He thanked his family and friends for keeping him grounded. Sudeep said these 30 years taught him humility and reminded him that success is never permanent. He promised to keep working harder, respect his craft, and give back to cinema. Sudeep began his career with a role in the film Thayavva.

SCREENING OF "CULT"

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah watched the movie "Cult" at Orion Mall on Saturday. He watched the film, which stars Zaid Khan son of Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed as the lead actor. ➤ CH PHOTO

Rasha Thandani Makes Telugu Debut With Srinivasa Mangapuram Film

Bollywood star Raveena Tandon's daughter Rasha Thandani is set to make her Telugu film debut in Srinivasa Mangapuram, directed by Ajay Bhupathi. She will play the female lead Manga opposite Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni, marking her first major entry into Telugu cinema.

Young actress Rasha Thandani, daughter of Bollywood star Raveena Tandon, is ready to begin her journey in Telugu cinema. She will play the role of Manga in the upcoming romantic drama Srinivasa Mangapuram. The film stars her opposite Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni, nephew of popular actor Mahesh Babu. The makers recently released new posters from the film, revealing Rasha's character name and looks. In one poster, she is seen wearing a purple kurti while standing in a garden filled with greenery and flowers. Her calm and graceful appearance has caught the attention of fans. Sharing the poster online, the team welcomed her to Telugu cinema and promised an engaging performance. Another poster shows Rasha in a completely different style. She is dressed in a black top and blue jeans, sitting confidently on a bike. This look highlights a bolder side of her character and has added excitement around her debut.

Srinivasa Mangapuram is directed by Ajay Bhupathi, who is known for successful films like RX 100 and Mangalavaaram. The film also marks the acting debut of Jaya Krishna Ghattamaneni. His first look poster, showing him riding a bike with an intense expression, was released earlier.

The music for the film will be composed by GV Prakash Kumar.

Aishwarya Rajesh Speaks About Difficult And Disturbing Early Career

Aishwarya Rajesh, now widely admired for her powerful and grounded performances, recently spoke candidly about the disturbing experiences she encountered at the start of her acting career. Appearing on filmmaker Nikhil Vijayendra Simha's podcast, the actor reflected on incidents that deeply affected her and highlighted the realities many young women continue to face in the film industry.

She recalled an unsettling episode during an early photoshoot when she was still very young. Aishwarya said she attended the assignment with her brother, but the photographer asked him to wait outside and took her inside alone. Once inside, he handed her lingerie and made an inappropriate request, leaving her shocked, confused, and frightened. She admitted that for a brief moment she almost complied, but her instincts warned her that something was seriously wrong. Thinking quickly, she told the photographer she needed her brother's permission before proceeding, which allowed her to exit the situation safely. Aishwarya revealed that she never discussed the incident at home and later wondered how many others endured similar experiences in silence. The actor also recounted another painful moment on a film set, where a director publicly scolded her for arriving a few minutes late. While she accepted professional criticism, being shouted at and compared to actresses felt humiliating.

Films are no longer being made as independently as before: Anurag Kashyap

In the discussion titled 'Fearless Film Making' held as part of the 17th Bengaluru International Film Festival, Bollywood actor-director Anurag Kashyap participated and spoke openly about the current trends in cinema, politics, and technology. Renowned film critic Baradwaj Rangan moderated the session.

"In today's times, making films like Gangs of Wasseypur or Black Friday is impossible. Some subjects have become politically sensitive and lead to controversies," Anurag Kashyap opined.

"Directors from countries like Iran or Russia are making films despite facing far greater restrictions than us. Indian directors should draw inspiration from them," he said.

Speaking about the recent film Dhurandhar, director Anurag Kashyap said, "This is a good example of a courageous mainstream film. I liked the film, but I didn't like some of the ideologies. The dialogue about 'This is the new India' and one long political monologue, among a total of three scenes, were unnecessary; even without them, the film's impact would not have diminished."

Kashyap remarked that calling films 'propaganda' or 'promotion' is itself a form of propaganda.

"Hollywood's Marvel films propagate American supremacy, but no one criticizes them from that perspective," he added.

Alia Bhatt Shows Chaos Behind Creating Her Glam Look

Actress Alia Bhatt recently gave fans a fun look at the busy moments behind her latest high-glam photoshoot. She shared a lighthearted video on social media that showed the confusion, laughter, and teamwork involved in getting her final look ready. The clip quickly caught attention for its playful and honest feel.

In the video, Alia admitted she had no clear idea about the style planned for the day. She asked her team what kind of look they were creating. Her team replied that they wanted to keep things simple and only enhance the way she had arrived at the shoot. This answer amused the actress.

Adding humor to the moment, Alia joked that she wanted to look like a mannequin held by one of the team members. Her playful comments showed her relaxed nature during the process. Despite the chaos, the team continued working smoothly to bring the vision together.

Towards the end of the video, Alia revealed her final look. She appeared in a striking short hair style that impressed many viewers. Sharing the clip, she said there was no shortage of chaos behind the scenes.

Apart from fashion updates, Alia also shared a professional announcement. She and her sister Shaheen Bhatt will produce a coming-of-age romantic comedy titled Don't Be Shy. The film will be made under their banner Eternal Sunshine Productions with Prime Video. Alia said the story felt honest and special. She also has films Love and War and Alpha in progress. Fans welcomed the update.

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